SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging

WHO WE ARE
How it Works...

SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging
(formerly Southwest Missouri Office on
Aging) is a mission-led, not-for-profit
Area Agency on Aging serving 17
counties in southwest Missouri including
Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Douglas,
Greene, Howell, Lawrence, Oregon,
Ozark, Polk, Shannon, Stone, Taney, Tex-
as, Webster, and Wright.

The Older Americans Act (OAA)
In 1965, this national act established
helpful services for seniors and their
families under the Administration on
Aging.

The Aging Services Network
The Administration on Aging sends OAA
funding to State Agencies on Aging.
Funds are then distributed to the regional
Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) within
each state.

AAAs are the stewards for initiating and
maintaining OAA programs. There are 10
AAAs in Missouri. SeniorAge is one of
them. Each AAA is closely monitored by
strict federal and state guidelines.

Senior Foundation of the Ozarks
Because seniors have many needs not
covered by OAA funding, in 1989 a
Foundation was created to raise and
distribute special needs funds for
individuals and our senior centers.
In 2016 they changed their name to
Senior Foundation of the Ozarks.

Our Mission
Working together.

Our Vision
Opportunities, answers,
and freedoms for all seniors.

Who we are and how we got here.

In March of 2016, Southwest Missouri Office on Aging
made a big change. We officially became SeniorAge Area
Agency on Aging. For years, we have been working on a
fresh rebranding of our name and image—so people can
more easily understand who we are and who we serve.

SeniorAge is easy to say, easy to explain, and easy to
remember. Our logo creation casts a shade of diversity
(leaves) on the folks we serve, along with a forward
motion in services to seniors (path). It’s as exciting as
fireworks filling the sky, yet represents the changing
stages in life, just as leaves show new beauty with each
season.

Our new name does have the word “age” in it; but, after
years of debating the best way to identify who we serve,
we came to the conclusion that “age” is something every
person is—whether it is child age, teenage, driving age,
voting age, or senior age. We stand proud of who we are,
who we are becoming, and where we are going on life’s
journeys with you. We are SeniorAge!
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The goal set for Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) by the Older Americans Act is clear: develop a comprehensive network of services that work together to encourage the optimal health and independence of older adults. Because the range of capabilities among older persons is wide, this is a complex challenge. At one extreme, a senior may be in excellent health without any challenges to independence. At the other extreme, a senior may be very frail and require significant help. In between these two extremes are diverse economic, social, and medical conditions.

An older person may need help from others. For many, this help is provided by a network of family, friends, and neighbors. But a senior who is unable to meet needs through such an informal network must increasingly draw upon support from the larger community. This support may include a hot meal enjoyed with friends in a senior center dining room and transportation to the doctor or, if more help is needed, meals delivered to the home and housekeeper visits.

As an Area Agency on Aging, our effectiveness depends on our ability to appropriately match services to the needs of each individual. This is the calling of an Area Agency on Aging... and it defines our identity.

This is who we are.
We’re Part of a National ‘AAA Family’

Under the Administration on Aging (AoA), there are over 600 Area Agencies on Aging across the United States and over 200 tribal organizations. When seniors need help within our own communities, we are the first call. We encourage, coordinate, and deliver community-based services that link local, public, private, voluntary, and corporate resources. We also monitor the performance of all services funded by the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) within our territory.

We’re Part of a Missouri ‘AAA Family’

In Missouri there are 10 AAAs, each serving a different region of the state. We serve Region I which includes 10,000 square miles of 17 counties in southwest Missouri. The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (ma4) is the collective voice for the 10 AAAs in our state. Ma4 hosts a state-wide senior conference each year called The Summit on Aging and Health.

How We Are Funded

Funds authorized through the Older Americans Act are distributed three times:

• The federal Administration on Aging (AoA) allocates funds to each State Unit on Aging using an interstate funding formula. (The Department of Health and Senior Services is Missouri’s State Unit on Aging.)

• State Units on Aging then distribute the funds to the Area Agency on Aging divisions within their state, using an intrastate funding formula. These formulas are based on senior census, economic need, and other factors.

• Area Agencies on Aging then distribute funding across their local programs and services, wherever gaps are identified. Besides federal Older Americans Act funds, Missouri’s Area Agencies on Aging receive additional funds from:
  - Missouri General Revenue
  - USDA Cash and Commodities
  - County Senior Citizens’ Services Funds
  - Individual, Local, and Federal Grants
  - Social Service Block Grants
  - Missouri Medicaid
  - Customer Contributions
  - Senior Foundation of the Ozarks
Our Funding and Performance is Under Watchful Care

Every Area Agency on Aging writes an area plan and submits it to their State Unit on Aging. If it is approved, the state and the AAA enter into a contract. Under that contract, the AAA provides Older Americans Act services compliant with all regulations.

Missouri’s State Unit on Aging, the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), monitors our performance through monthly financial and performance reports, and they conduct extensive annual financial and management audits to ensure we meet all federal or state regulations and good stewardship.

Public hearings, annual reports, local advisory councils, and governing boards add public scrutiny to track success in meeting the challenges and responsibilities within our mission.

Our Organizational Structure

Eight of Missouri’s Area Agencies on Aging, including SeniorAge, are mission-led 501(c)3 corporations under a governing board of directors, tax exempt as a 501(c)3. Two Missouri AAAs have other forms of government: Mid-America Regional Council, based in Kansas City, is part of a Council of Governments; and the St. Louis AAA is operated by the City of St. Louis.

SeniorAge’s policy is established by a 17-member Board of Directors. Each member is democratically elected from one of our 17 counties. This board allocates all funds, sets all policies, and evaluates performance. Our board members are elected for three-year terms and may serve as many times as they are elected. At least 51% of them must be age 60 or older. Staggered terms assure that no more than six are replaced in the same year. This maintains a core of experienced members.

2016-17 SeniorAge Board of Directors

Paul Brockman, President, LAWRENCE
Ray Weaver, 1st Vice Pres., CHRISTIAN
Dale Johnson, 2nd Vice Pres., OREGON
Rich Meyerkord, Treasurer, STONE
Barbara Beasley, Secretary, TEXAS
Jerry Arnold, BARRY
Armetta Sedge, DADE
Mae Burtin, DALLAS
Larry Morrison, DOUGLAS
Judy Warren, GREENE
Matthew Mansfield, HOWELL
Nancy Thomas, OZARK
Alvin Meyer, POLK
Sharon Thomas, SHANNON
Cy Murray, TANEY
John Gentry, WEBSTER
Earlene Coday, WRIGHT

Board members at work in 2006
An Advisory Council is appointed by our Board of Directors, in compliance with federal regulations. This council submits recommendations to the board. A diverse group of consumers, service providers, elected officials, and minorities serve on this board.

The administration and management of our Area Agency on Aging is the responsibility of our Chief Executive Officer. Our CEO is directly responsible to the Board of Directors for all programs.

Early in our history, we established a volunteer County Council on Aging within each of our 17 counties to help us provide services at a local level. Three of these councils continue in operation: Lawrence, Barry, and Polk counties.

SeniorAge provides services through 36 Senior Centers, each managed by a Center Administrator. These centers are clustered into four geographical regions. Four Regional Team Leaders and the Director of Field Operations provide oversight, mentoring, and leadership in these areas.

Thirty-three of our Senior Centers are “direct service sites.” We provide the employees and direct payment of operational expenses for these centers. Three of our Senior Centers are “contract service sites.” We provide a grant to an oversight organization who is responsible for staffing and meeting expenses with the grant. Our contract sites are Mtn. Grove (contracting with the City of Mtn. Grove), Summersville (contracting with the Summersville Board of Directors), and Mtn. View (contracting with the city of Mtn. View). In addition to direct employees and contract partners, our organizational structure relies heavily on a network of extraordinary volunteers who make many of our services possible.

Our Area Plan

It takes good planning to develop and coordinate the right senior services for our communities. During each cycle, we redefine the current needs of our communities, and identify resources and gaps in meeting those needs. Based on this study, we prepare an Area Plan, detailing needs, how funds will be allocated cost-effectively to meet needs, and how gaps will be bridged with quality care. As a part of this process, we write policies and procedures and designate community focal points for service.

In developing our plan, we are careful to work with community service partners to effectively meet needs and avoid duplication. These coalitions inspire creative ways to meet identified needs.
We Follow Through with Service

To fulfill area plans, Area Agencies on Aging sometimes develop new services. For those programs, we must find financial and staff support, train staff, coordinate with existing programs, and educate the community about the new service.

To be good stewards of resources, we offer services two ways. Our own employees and volunteers provide some direct services, like information and assistance, nutrition, and care coordination. We provide other contract services through community providers. These contract services include in-home personal care, respite, foot care clinics, light housekeeping, and transportation.

Community providers bid competitively for our contract services through Request for Proposals (RFPs) or Request for Qualification (RFQs). Our governing Board assesses who can best deliver efficient, quality service, then SeniorAge closely monitors the performance of each contract partner through site visits, audits, reports, and customer satisfaction surveys. We have approximately 40 contractors.

Most of our Older Americans Act programs are considered alternative services because they are designed to give seniors alternate choices to institutional care—choices that help them remain independent. For seniors already in long-term-care facilities, we provide the nursing home ombudsman program. Trained individuals in this program (contracted through the Council of Churches), help resolve concerns residents have with care.

Who Can Access Our Services?

We primarily serve seniors age 60+ and their caregivers. Seniors qualify for our services on the basis of need, not income. Those who receive our help have the opportunity to contribute toward the cost of their services. This opportunity to contribute is required under the Older Americans Act; however, services are not affected by whether or not contributions are received. All contributions are voluntary and confidential.

Some programs have special qualifications. To participate in our meals program, a person must be 60+, or be the spouse of a person 60+. The Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP) accept persons 55 or older who meet income guidelines. Several of our supplemental grants serve all ages—like our Affordable Health Care Navigator grant which provides assistance with enrollment in Marketplace insurance.
A Solid Team: SeniorAge and Senior Center Boards

During the early 1980s, the SeniorAge Board of Directors made a standing commitment to help senior organizations achieve local ownership of activity centers. This would guarantee a future for senior centers, even if our funding ceased.

To fulfill this commitment, SeniorAge began encouraging senior corporations to purchase senior center activity buildings, with the assurance that we would then rent or lease the building from them for services. The income from our rent or lease payments has helped senior communities successfully work toward debt-free ownership of their buildings. Once facilities are debt free, we maintain services for a nominal lease consideration. We also continue assistance with utility expenses.

Our Senior Centers are generally open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and they are managed by an employee of SeniorAge, or contract employee, whose title is Senior Center Administrator (SCA).

The Center Administrator is responsible for developing and organizing activities, programs, and services to benefit community seniors. The administrator also develops resources and recruits volunteers within the community to meet local needs.

Senior Center Boards work with SeniorAge in many ways to determine what services are needed and how to best deliver them to the local community. Through their efforts, they add senior programs and services that SeniorAge cannot fund; they fundraise to help support the expenses of operating a senior center; and many own their own building and serve as the leasing manager.

SeniorAge employees and local senior boards need good lines of communication to assure the most effective outreach to seniors within the community. To maintain a balance of power, neither has authority over the other. SeniorAge and local senior center boards are separate 501(c)3s. SeniorAge works with each facility under a service provider contract.
Remember When?
How We Got Here ... A Legislative Timeline

Focus on the special concerns of seniors has been fairly recent. Although Social Security was enacted in 1935, further help for older persons was slow in following.

In the late 1950s, national leaders realized decreasing birth rates and increasing life expectancy would transform American society. In 1900 only one in 20 Americans was 65 years or above, but the count would be one in eight by 2000 and it is expected to be nearly 1 in 5 by 2025.

In response to this big picture, the first White House Conference on Aging called for community alternatives to nursing home care. Congress unanimously passed the Older Americans Act in 1965 to empower this initiative.

Following are the highlights that led to the passage of the OAA, and the national and state progress made since its appearance:

1920 Civil Service Retirement Act is passed for government employees.

1935 Social Security Act becomes law; includes Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, the Permanently Disabled, and Dependent Children.

1937 Railroad Retirement Act provides pensions for retired railroad employees and spouses.

1950 First National Conference on Aging under Truman elevates aging issues to national recognition.

1952 Federal Council on Aging created by President Eisenhower; first-time federal funds are appropriated for social service programs for older persons under the Social Security Act.

1956 Special Staff on Aging is established within the Office of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), to coordinate responsibilities for aging.

1958 Legislation calls for a White House Conference on Aging.

1959 Housing Act authorizes a low-interest loan program for non-profit senior rental projects, and lowers eligibility age to 62 for women in low-income public housing.
1960 Social Security Administration eliminates age 50 as the minimum age for disability benefits, and makes the retirement test and full-insured status more liberal.

1961 1st White House Conference on Aging establishes the precedent of a conference every 10 years, sponsored by the President. Conferences serve to promote the dignity, health, and economic security of senior Americans. 1961 was the best known of all White House conferences.

Social Security amendments lower the retirement age for men from 65 to 62, broaden the retirement test, increase minimum benefits, and increase benefits to aged widows.

1962 Legislation establishes an independent and permanent U.S. Commission on Aging.

1965 Older Americans Act is signed into law; State Units on Aging are created; the Administration on Aging is established within Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).

Medicare, Title 18 of the Social Security Act, passes to provide older adults affordable health care; Medicaid, Title 19 of the Social Security Act, passes to provide a health insurance program for low-income persons.

1967 OAA is extended for two years; the Age Discrimination Act is signed into law.

AoA moves into newly created Social and Rehabilitative Service Agency.

1969 OAA amendments provide funds for model projects, Foster Grandparents, and Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP).

1971 2nd White House Conference on Aging.

1972 A new Title VII is created under the OAA, authorizing funds for a national nutrition program for the elderly.

Medicare eligibility extends to people with disabilities and end-stage renal disease.

1973 OAA Comprehensive Services Amendment establishes AAAs. New Title V is created under OAA, authorizing grants for multi-purpose senior centers.

Community Service Employment grants are created for low-income persons age 55 and above; Comprehensive Employment and Training Act expands to include older persons.
1974 Title XX of the Social Security Amendments authorizes grants to states for protective senior services, homemaker, transportation, adult daycare, employment training, information and referral, nutrition assistance, and health support.

OAA amendments add **transportation** under Title III model projects.

**The Housing and Community Development Act** provides for low-income housing for seniors and persons with disability.

**National Institute on Aging** created to conduct research and training related to the aging process, including diseases and problems of an aging population.

Title V of the Farm and Rural Housing Program of 1949 expands to include the rural elderly as a focus group.

1974-1975 National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A) was organized.

The Missouri Housing Tax Credit was established.

1975 OAA amendments authorize grants under Title III to tribal organizations. Access, in-home care, and legal services are mandated as OAA priorities.

1976 First n4a Conference.

1977 OAA amendments require changes in Title VII nutrition programs, primarily related to the availability of surplus commodities through the Department of Agriculture.

Missouri sales tax on pharmaceuticals was deleted, in part due to Missouri Silver-Haired Legislature efforts.

1978 OAA amendments consolidate Title III AAA administration and social services, Title VII nutrition services, and Title V multi-purpose senior centers into a new Title III.

**Congregate Housing Services Act** authorizes contracts with local public housing agencies and non-profit corporations, to provide congregate independent living programs.

OAA amendments require each state to establish a **long-term care ombudsman program** to serve nursing home residents.

1979 Education splits from U.S. Dept of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) and becomes a separate Department of Education (ED). HEW is renamed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
1981 3rd White House Conference on Aging. OAA reauthorized with emphasis on supportive services to help older persons remain independent in the community.

AAAs granted multi-year planning cycles under Area Plans.

OAA expands ombudsman coverage to “board and care” homes.

1983 Missouri Silver-Haired Legislature was incorporated and the 17-member Board of Directors is created for SeniorAge.

1984 OAA is reauthorized, clarifying and reaffirming the roles of States and Area Agencies on Aging in coordinating community-based services, and in maintaining accountability for the funding of national priority services.

Alzheimer’s and other neurological and organic brain disorders receive special project emphasis.

1987 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act provides nursing home reform in the areas of nurse aide training, survey and certification procedures, pre-admission screening, and annual reviews for persons with mental illness.

This act also mandates direct and immediate access to ombudsmen volunteers for nursing home residents when protection and advocacy is needed.

States are charged to guarantee ombudsman access to facilities and patient records; state Ombudsmen are authorized to designate local ombudsman programs; adequate legal counsel is required for ombudsman programs. AAAs granted multi-year planning cycles under Area Plans.

OAA is reauthorized with distinct appropriations for six more services: in-home services; long-term care ombudsman; health education and promotion; prevention of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation; outreach activities for persons who may be eligible for benefits under supplemental security income (SSI), Medicaid, and food stamps; and assistance for special needs.

Emphasis is given to serving those in the greatest economic and social need, including low-income minorities.

1989 Senior Citizens Services fund County Mill Tax made available for Missouri county votes under House Bill 351.
1990 **National Affordable Housing Act** reauthorizes HUD Elderly Housing Program and provides for supportive service demonstrations.

**Americans with Disabilities Act** extends protection from discrimination in employment and public accommodations to persons with disabilities.

**Age Discrimination in Employment Act** makes discrimination against older workers with regard to employee benefits illegal, in most cases.

1992 OAA is reauthorized with **increased focus on caregivers**, intergenerational programs, and protection of elder rights.

Commissioner on Aging is elevated to **Assistant Secretary for Aging**.

OAA amendments add a new Title VII Vulnerable Elder Rights Activities which includes the long-term care ombudsman; prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation; elder rights and legal assistance development; and benefits outreach, counseling, and assistance programs. Legislation emphasizes the value of coordinating all four programs.

OAA amendments highlight the role of local ombudsman programs.

1993 **Fernando M. Torres-Gil** sworn in as the first Assistant Secretary for Aging in the Department of Health and Human Services.

1995 **4th White House Conference on Aging**; 30th anniversaries of Older Americans Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Foster Grandparent Program.

1996 OAA funding cut by 5%.

1997 OAA expires; AAAs begin a history of operating under continuing resolutions.

1999 International Year of Older Persons: A Society for All Ages.

2000 OAA is reauthorized with the creation of the National Family Caregiver Program.

2001 — Creation of Department of Health and Senior Services to provide social services to the elderly and disabled adults through a variety of in-home support services, and direct and protective services.

2002 — Missouri’s State Pharmacy Assistance Program is created by the 93rd General Assembly to provide prescription drug assistance to Missourians. It coordinates benefits with Medicare’s Part D Prescription Drug Program.
2005 5th White House Conference on Aging; National Council on Aging Falls Free Initiative.

2006 OAA is reauthorized for five years with amendments that provide flexibility to states to customize programs to meet the needs of their seniors. Other amendments call for evidenced-based prevention programs and self-directed programs. Medicare benefits expand to provide Medicare D to prescription drug coverage.

2007 Summit on Global Aging.

2009 — Missouri General Revenue Core Budget for Missouri AAAs cut by $3 million.

2010 — Affordable Care Act enacted.

2011 National Alzheimer’s Project Act signed into law.

2012 — Creation of Administration on Community Living - bringing together the Administration on Aging, Office of Disability, and Administration on Development Disabilities.

2014 — ma4 (Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging) is the first AAA to be awarded a federal Affordable Health Care Navigator Grant.
Reviewing the Older Americans Act

Today the Older Americans Act is considered to be the major vehicle for the organization and delivery of services to seniors and their caregivers.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) Funds Seven “Titles”

**Title I — Declaration of Objectives: Definitions**

Sec. 101. In keeping with the traditional American concept of the inherent dignity of the individual in our democratic society, the older people of our Nation are entitled to the full and free enjoyment of the following objectives:

- Adequate income in retirement for the American standard of living.
- The best possible physical and mental health which science can make available and without regard to economic status.
- Suitable housing, independently selected, designed and located with reference to special needs, and available at costs which seniors can afford.
- Full restorative services for those who require institutional care, and a comprehensive array of community-based, long-term care services adequate to appropriately sustain older people in their communities and in their homes. [This includes] support to family members and other persons providing voluntary care to older individuals needing long-term care services.
- Opportunity for employment with no discriminatory personnel practices because of age.
- Retirement in health, honor, and dignity after years of contribution to the economy.
- Participatory activity within the widest range of civic, cultural, educational, training, and recreational opportunities.
- Efficient community services with emphasis on a continuum of care for vulnerable seniors, including: low-cost transportation, choice in supported living arrangements, and coordinated social assistance – readily available when needed.
- Immediate benefit from proven research which can sustain and improve health and happiness.
- Freedom, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative in planning and managing their own lives; full participation in the planning and operation of community-based services provided for their benefit, and protection against abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
**Title II: Administration on Aging**

Establishes the U.S. Administration on Aging (within the Department of Health Education and Welfare), the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs, and the Federal Council on Aging.

**Title III: Grants for State and Community Programs**

Provides grants to State Units on Aging for programs including:

**III B Programs:** Supportive Services Information & Assistance, Transportation, In-Home, Case Management, Public Information & Education, Legal Services, Recreation

**III C1 Programs:** Congregate (Group) Nutrition

**III C2 Programs:** Home-Delivered Meals

**III D Programs:** Disease Prevention Health Screening and Medication Management

**III E Programs:** Family Caregiver Services Information, Education, Assistance, Care Coordination, Individual Counseling, Adult Day Care, Respite, Durable Medical, Minor Home Modification, Utility Assistance.
Title IV: Training, Discretionary Projects

Funds training, research, and career preparation for the field of aging; projects for the protection of elders; health care projects in rural areas; computer training; technical assistance to improve transportation for seniors; multi-generational activity projects; Native American programs; multi-service centers; senior legal assistance projects.

Title V: Community Service Employment for Older Americans

Funds programs for unemployed, low-income persons 55+.

Title VI: Grants for Native Americans

Provides grants for social, nutritional, and caregiver support services for older Native Americans.

Title VII: Grants for Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection Activities

Includes ombudsman programs, prevention of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, and legal assistance programs.
Understanding the Older Americans Act

It belongs to us all.
This act has strong support from all political parties and all generations.

It extends independence.
It funds home-delivered and Senior Center dining room meals, multi-purpose activity centers, elder abuse prevention, transportation, light housekeeping assistance, senior employment, adult day care, and outreach to minority and rural populations.

It helps families stay together.
OAA programs help seniors stay healthy and active in their communities and families through options for independence.

It saves taxpayers money.
OAA community programs meet local senior needs, often through the cost-efficient support of volunteers. Federal OAA funds are strengthened by state and local support and contributions. Keeping seniors healthy and independent through OAA services drastically reduces the amount of tax dollars spent on Medicare/Medicaid institutional care.

It inspires volunteerism.
Volunteers make so much more possible! They deliver home meals to frail elderly, drive seniors to doctor visits, prepare taxes, and help activity centers thrive.

It braves challenges.
More of us are older and more of us are living longer. The fastest growing age group is 85+. Since 1980, OAA programs have lost 40 percent of their capacity because of increased costs, increased service population, and reduced funding. The waiting list for services is growing.
When the OAA Older Americans Act passed in 1965, State Units on Aging (SUAs) were formed to receive each state’s share of funding. Missouri’s first State Units on Aging was the Office of Special Services within the Division of Family Services.

In 1972, Missouri was divided into 21 planning and service areas (PSAs) called Regional Councils on Aging. Each council received a planning grant to identify local senior needs, and then to coordinate grass-roots services to meet those needs.

The University of Missouri secured a state contract to organize the Regional Council in southwest Missouri. They hired Winston Bledsoe to lead it, and Dorothy (Rambo) Knowles to be his secretary. On October 1, 1972, the Lakes Country Regional Council on Aging opened in a leased building at 1824 South Stewart in Springfield, Missouri.

The Lakes Country Regional Council on Aging served ten counties: Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Greene, Lawrence, Polk, Stone, Taney, and Webster. We determined the two greatest needs for these counties were nutrition services and transportation.

To meet these needs, we immediately helped organize a volunteer County Council on Aging in each of our counties. These County Councils then applied to us for funds to begin services. Today, three of these County Councils are still active - Polk, Lawrence, and Barry counties.
1973 — Creation of Nine Area Agencies on Aging and Silver-Haired Legislature

In October, 1973, an OAA amendment required State Units on Aging to create Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) within their state. Each AAA would receive a portion of the state’s OAA funding to serve the communities within their geographical area.

The amendment also limited administration costs for all AAAs to 8.5% of the total OAA state funding. In good administrative stewardship, the 21 Regional Councils were consolidated into nine Area Agencies on Aging. Elaine Reiter, Division of Aging, was instrumental in implementing the transition of Regional Councils to AAAs.

Southwest Missouri Area Agency on Aging (now SeniorAge), designated to serve 21 counties, was created by merging the following Regional Councils: Lakes Country Regional Council (10 counties) Ozark Gateway Regional Council (4 counties) South Central Ozark Regional Council (7 counties). Three employees from the original Regional Councils were retained for the newly consolidated AAA: Winston Bledsoe, Executive Director Dorothy Knowles, Secretary, and W.E. Elmore.

Four board members from each of the previous Regional Councils formed the first twelve-member AAA Board of Directors. This Board of Directors approved five administrative staff positions: Dorothy Knowles, Social Services; Larry Tucker, Field Services Director; Jerena Staley, Accountant; Charles Fago, Nutrition Project Director; and Lora Jordan, Administrative Assistant.

A state-wide organization, Missouri Alliance of Area Agencies on Aging Administrators (MA5), was created to provide a unified voice for all nine of Missouri’s new AAAs. The executive directors from each AAA participated in its joint advocacy work.

The name of this collaborative was later changed to Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (mA4), and that name remains the same today.

Missouri’s Silver-Haired Legislature (SHL) was the first senior legislative group to be established in the nation. It was first sponsored by the Jaycees until 1975 when it was then sponsored by the Missouri Division of Aging (now the Department of Health and Senior Services) and the Area Agencies on Aging.


1974 — 11 Senior Centers Open
During our first year as an Area Agency on Aging, we began establishing meal facilities and senior centers, and we expanded the Older Americans Transportation System (OATS) from the central part of the state into our territory.

In 1974, SeniorAge opened 14 meal facilities, including Neosho, Joplin, and Lamar, and we opened 11 senior activity centers.

1976 — Moving Forward
In 1976 Winston asked a commission from the University of Missouri to evaluate our AAA performance. They recommended a restructuring of our 12-member Board of Directors to include one member from each of our 21 counties. The conversion was made.

Winston Bledsoe, president of our state MA5 at that time, was the visionary for the first N4A conference in St. Louis, held in 1976.

In 1976, our agency also received its first grant to establish a model project. With it, we were to increase the availability of information and legal services in rural areas. Becky Quinn and Gregg Hartley, in turn, managed this mobile information and assistance project.

1977 — Administrative Offices Relocate
On July 4, 1997, we moved our administrative offices into a three-story building at 317 Park Central East in downtown Springfield. Based on the census, this downtown locale aligned our services with a concentration of senior population and need. As an added benefit, rent was affordable. (Ten years later, in 1987, we purchased this building from a family-held ownership.)

We converted the first floor of this building into a senior center; the second floor into a training and program center; and the third floor into expanded administrative offices. On average, more than 175 seniors came each day for lunch.

Being the trusted best call for seniors and their families is a challenge we embrace. We work diligently to keep pace with many exciting challenges.
Senior Centers Double
Between 1976 and 1978 we opened 12 more senior centers.

1978 — Division of Planning and Service Area
In 1978, four of our western counties (Barton, Jasper, Newton, and McDonald) separated into an independent AAA, reducing our service area to 17 counties.

The number of Missouri’s AAAs rose from nine to the present number of ten, and we changed our corporate name to Southwest Missouri Office on Aging.

1983 the 17-member Board of Directors was created for SeniorAge.

1989 — Creation of SWMOA Foundation
The SWMOA Foundation was created to help fund the needs of seniors and senior centers not covered by Older Americans Act funding. The name changed to Senior Foundation of the Ozarks in 2016.

1990 to Present — 21 New Senior Centers
Since 1990 we have opened 21 additional senior centers. We also contracted to provide services through six additional Senior Centers.

In 1993 our 10-year building lease for West Side Senior Center (adjoining Greene Haven Nursing Home) came to a close and was not renewable, so we closed this center.
1990 to 2016 — County Senior Citizen’s Services Fund Boards Created

Senior Citizens’ Service Funds are established to help provide basic services and nutrition to seniors who need a helping hand. The governing body of any county, upon approval of a majority of the qualified voters of such county or city voting thereon, levy and collect a tax not to exceed five cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation. Currently within the SeniorAge Territory, there have been 11 Senior Citizens’ Service Funds established:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Lawrence County</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Oregon County</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Stone County</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Shannon County</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Christian County</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Greene County</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Barry County</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Polk County</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Webster County</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Taney County</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Dallas County</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1997 — Administrative Office Moves Again

Over the years, the senior population in downtown Springfield began to decline, and modifications to streets and parking areas made access difficult. By 1997 the senior center was drawing less than 20 daily participants.

After 20 years downtown, we transferred our Springfield senior center to the South Side Senior Center on Fremont, and we built a new administrative and customer walk-in site at 1735 South Fort in Springfield. The benefits of these new locations included convenient parking at the door and quick access from all corners of Springfield.

Since this move, customers have vastly increased, and major new programs and services have been added.

2015 — The South Fort walk-in service site is remodeled to offer HIPPA-compliant spaces for counseling.
2016 — Southwest Missouri Office on Aging Changes Name to SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging
SWMOA will forever hold a place in our history books, but from here forward we are the new SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging.

Being the trusted best call for seniors and their families is a challenge we embrace. We work diligently to keep pace with many exciting challenges.
Missouri Seniors are just “one incident away” from a life event that threatens their stability of independent living.

Area Agencies on Aging are here to help.

“Lena’s” Story . . .

Lena is a spunky 88-year-old lady, living in her own home in the community where she grew up. Because of a sudden illness, she finds herself in the hospital. After several weeks of expensive treatment, Lena’s doctor says she’s ready to go home, but Lena has no one at home to help her. He offers her two options: She can go to a nursing home or arrange sufficient help in her home.

Although she’s not in the best health, Lena longs to remain independent and return home. The Area Agency on Aging is called upon to help make this possible.

Lena is released within a week and experiences the relief of being home again. An Area Agency on Aging Care Coordinator sets up a plan with Lena. Five days a week, a friendly volunteer delivers a hot, nutritious lunch from the local AAA senior activity center. Twice a month a homemaker comes to Lena’s home to do essential tasks like laundry, and shopping for groceries. A home-health nurse comes on Mondays to check on Lena and report to her doctor. A physical therapist comes on Tuesdays to supervise her exercises.

Because of all these community support services, Lena’s hope to remain in her home is a comforting reality.

We serve as a doorway to help—identifying the needs of community seniors and matching each need to a quality, cost-effective service.
“Jim’s” Story ...

Jim, age 75, lost his wife last year. His daughter Sheila, who lives in another state, is concerned because her father’s physical and mental wellness has deteriorated since her mother’s death. While visiting her father, she makes an appointment for him with the family physician.

The doctor diagnoses Jim’s primary medical problem as malnutrition. In addition, Jim is suffering from moderate depression, a common condition following the death of a spouse.

The doctor prescribes medication for Jim and suggests a balanced diet. He also encourages Jim to make friends in the community, but Jim can’t drive because of recent eye surgery. Luckily, the doctor’s receptionist knows about the local Area Agency on Aging because they help her mother. She refers Sheila to the Area Agency on Aging where she learns about the community AAA senior center in her father’s town.

Now Jim is at the center nearly every day because he has friends there. A van takes him. He eats with his friends, watches the calendar for social activities, and feels secure knowing the Center Administrator is watching out for other services he might need. After a few months, he chooses to volunteer as a greeter because he says it ‘keeps him young.’

Jim’s daughter is relieved. Her father is happy and well again.

We are Catalysts.
We serve as primary leaders in the community for advancing new services.

We are Planners.
We assess, analyze, facilitate, and improve existing service systems.

We are Coordinators.
We encourage local service providers to link together.

We are Advocates.
We assure seniors and their families access to comprehensive systems of care in the community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Northview</td>
<td>(Spfd)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YWCA</td>
<td>(Spfd)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boy’s Club</td>
<td>(Spfd)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Houston</td>
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<td>Ozark</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aurora</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Marshfield</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>West Plains</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Seymour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Nixa</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Forsyth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Cabool</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>(closed in 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Licking</td>
<td>(now independent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Willow Springs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Alton</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Forsyth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Ava</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Mtn. Grove</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Park Central, Spfd</td>
<td>(converted to South Side in 1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Mt. View</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Winona</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Bolivar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Westside Center</td>
<td>(Spfd)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Cassville</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Cabool Senior Housing auxiliary site</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Ash Grove</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Thayer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Monett</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Stillwell Senior Housing Complex (Satellite Center). Converted to home-delivered meals in 2005.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>Kimberling City</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Mt. Vernon</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Rogersville</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Eminence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Summersville</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>South Side</td>
<td>(Spfd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Birch Tree</td>
<td>(converted to home-delivered meals in 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Strafford</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Shell Knob</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Humansville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rogersville moves into their new building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>Began assisting Fair Grove Senior Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Central Crossing Senior Center expands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Marshfield senior-owned Senior Community Center built</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ozark County Senior Center obtains new building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Touring Our Towns

- Alton Senior Center
- Aurora Senior Center
- Cassville Senior Center
- Houston Senior Center
- Nixa Senior Center
- Seymour Senior Center
- Rogersville Senior Center
- Willow Springs Senior Center
We make it easier for seniors to live at home.

We serve within our communities as the first call of help and hope for seniors and their caregivers.

We work hard to identify the needs of seniors within our communities and then coordinate services to meet those needs.

We direct seniors to helpful service choices, regardless of income.

We improve services for seniors with diverse income and health situations.

We help seniors and their families navigate a complex system of services.

We advocate on behalf of older persons. When public policies or programs discriminate against seniors, we educate and mobilize seniors on the issue.

We provide help on a voluntary, anonymous contribution basis. Services are not based on whether or not contributions are possible.
Ash Grove Senior Center
Humansville Senior Center
R. Clyde Trieman Senior Center - Mt. View
Summersville Senior Center
The Center - Ozark County, Gainesville
Dade County Senior Center - Greenfield
South Side Senior Center - Springfield
Polk County Senior Center - Bolivar
Strafford Senior Center
Douglas County Senior Center - Ava
We Offer Service

When senior services are needed, we’re the best call. No other agency has a comparable number of employees who are trained in one-on-one options counseling about diverse resources and services. Initially, Area Agencies on Aging focused on establishing community senior activity centers across planning and service areas. These centers provided meals and friendships. Soon, homemaker and transportation programs were added, and the network of centers reached into smaller, rural neighborhoods. Today, AAAs respond to all kinds of needs, generally under four objectives:

1. **Access Services (Pg. 32)**
   We help seniors find the services and resources they need.
   - We answer questions. (Information and Assistance)
   - We help individual seniors identify what assistance they need. (Care Coordination)
   - We help link seniors to public benefits that help with financial challenges.
   - We help provide transportation.

2. **Community-Based Services (Pg. 34)**
   We provide local health and social programs to prolong and enrich senior independence. Our services include:
   - Senior Center activities
   - Referral to legal services
   - Advocacy for senior wellbeing
   - Pension Rights assistance
   - Fraud/scam education
   - Elder abuse prevention
   - Affordable Health Care Coverage assistance (Navigator program)
   - Senior Center dining room meals
   - Volunteer opportunities
   - Health promotion and screening
   - Holiday programs
   - Help with tax and rebate filing
   - Fitness/evidence-based wellness opportunities
   - Nursing home ombudsman (Volunteers who address the concerns of seniors in care facilities.)

3. **In-Home Services (Pg. 35)**
   Our programs assist seniors who are limited to home environments, to delay or prevent the need for institutional care. We offer:
   - Home-delivered meals
   - Home safety modification
   - Telephone reassurance
   - Home repair
   - Personal care
   - Light housekeeping (when funding is available)
   - Checks and balances paperwork assistance

4. **Caregiver Services (Pg. 35)**
   We support and encourage caregivers through:
   - Information and resource linking
   - Home safety programs
   - Respite time away
   - Education programs
   - Counseling programs

When senior services are needed, we’re the best call. No other agency has a comparable number of employees who are trained in one-on-one options counseling about diverse resources and services. Initially, Area Agencies on Aging focused on establishing community senior activity centers across planning and service areas. These centers provided meals and friendships. Soon, homemaker and transportation programs were added, and the network of centers reached into smaller, rural neighborhoods. Today, AAAs respond to all kinds of needs, generally under four objectives:
Our Access Services

Information & Assistance
Seniors and their families rely on us for information and help in every kind of situation. We tackle it all! If we don’t have the answer, we find out who does.

Our qualified, committed staff provide counseling on:

- Housing options (in residential communities, or within independent, assisted, and skilled facilities)
- Retirement planning
- Finding resources for basic needs
- Pharmaceutical drug assistance
- Tax questions
- Relief assistance for caregivers
- Transportation options
- Missouri RX enrollment
- Or anything else that comes our way!

Many know us best for our unbiased, free-of-charge Medicare A-B-C-D, Advantage Plan, and medigap health insurance expertise, education, and help with enrollment. We emphasize this outreach during annual enrollment periods.

Care Coordination
Sometimes seniors and their families just feel lost. They aren’t sure what they need, who to call, or what help is available.

Our Care Coordinators help them identify problems, both large and small, talk through alternatives, and guide them in finding appropriate solutions.

Once we look at a senior’s ‘whole picture’ situation, we link the senior and family members to health and social services available locally.

Careful follow-up helps us make sure the right services were found.

Public Benefits Outreach
We educate seniors about which public benefits they may be eligible to receive.

We also help them understand the application processes. If they need help applying … we provide one-on-one assistance.
Information Through a Bi-Monthly Newsletter
Social Media, and Prime Time Radio

Our SeniorAge newsletter is distributed to thousands of seniors across all of our 17 counties six times per year. It’s packed with news, answers, and current events, and is available for home delivery, free of charge. It’s also available on our website at www.senioragemo.org.

Access to current news is available via our Facebook page at facebook.com/senioragemo.

The Prime Time on KICK radio show is a Senior-Age hosted program which features great information on healthcare, finance, travel, hospice, senior living, and other topics relevant to seniors and caregivers. The show airs every Tuesday at 11:00 am on 1340 AM and 92.3 FM.

Transportation Services
Transportation can be a serious problem for many. Taxis are expensive and often the public bus system is overwhelming. Without family or driving friends, many seniors need help getting to places of importance.

We fund programs that provide door-to-door transportation to local business, healthcare, and essential shopping locations.

We contract with many transportation providers, including:

- OATS
- Medi-Transit
- Eldercare Transit
- SMTS
- Consumer-directed wellness rides
- Springfield, West Plains, and Houston public bus transit
- In Greene County, we receive funding for taxi cab vouchers through the Greene County Senior Citizens’ Service Fund.
Our Community-Based Services

Senior Center Activities
Senior Centers are comfortable gathering places for food, friendship, and activity. Our center staff and volunteers create a place of trust to deal with needs. Each center is an Area Agency on Aging satellite of services, providing the help local communities most need.

Dining Room Meals
We serve lunch in our 36 senior center dining rooms. Salad bars and ice cream machines (funded through center boards and grants) in many of our centers help make it a great meal.

Legal Assistance
We provide legal assistance to seniors through contract partners. These agencies advise seniors and their families on financial and non-criminal legal concerns and rights.

Volunteer Excellence
We encourage active seniors to continue working within their community. All of our services are better because of the time and skills invested by volunteers at each of our senior centers.

Advocacy through Silver-Haired Legislature (SHL)
Missouri’s SHL is comprised of 150 volunteers: 12 representatives, and 3 senators from each of the 10 AAAs. Each May, we hold democratic elections within legislative districts. During their two-year terms, SHLs vote on the top five priority legislative concerns for Missouri seniors, and they promote legislation in the best interest of Missouri’s older adults.

Health and Evidence-Based Wellness
Our Senior Centers offer health education and screenings throughout the year, with emphasis on wellness and nutrition. Evidence-based wellness programs include Matter of Balance, Tai Chi, Chronic Disease and Self Management Education, foot care clinics, Diabetes Education, and Walk for Life.
Help with Tax/Rebate Filing
Each year, we help seniors file for millions of dollars in federal and state rebates and refunds, without charge. We train certified volunteers with the help of a Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) grant from the IRS. These volunteers complete federal and state tax forms, and housing expense rebates (MO-PTC Property Tax Credit).

Elder Abuse Prevention
We educate the public about ways to recognize, improve, and prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Long-Term Care Ombudsmen
These well-trained volunteers regularly visit nursing home residents to address any concerns or needs.

Holiday Programs
Year-end holidays can be lonely for many seniors. Our community partners help us bring cheer to these seniors through hand-delivered holiday dinners and hand-picked gifts. SeniorAge also plays host to Santa’s Little Helper, a program that encourages community support for seniors who are alone during the holidays and who might need a helping hand.

Navigator
The Affordable Care Act was designed to increase health insurance quality and affordability, lower the uninsured rate by expanding insurance coverage and reduce the costs of healthcare. SeniorAge helps individuals who need insurance navigate the insurance marketplace to find acceptable, qualifying insurance. For more information, contact us at 417-862-0762.

Pension Rights
South Central Pension Rights Project (SCPRP) helps people of any age within their coverage area find lost pension plans, appeal benefit denials, correct miscalculations, and understand pension rights. Funded primarily by the U.S. Administration for Community Living, SCPRP’s coverage area includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The project also extends services to the retiree’s spouse and other individuals if their pension plan or relative employment is located in the SCPRP coverage area.

Scam and Fraud Education (Senior Medicare Patrol - SMP)
SeniorAge and our Senior Centers offer educational programs to help protect seniors against fraud and scams. We bring in experts to talk about the many ways that seniors are financially exploited, and we have a team that will bring a Scam Jam session to a Center near you.
Our In-Home Services

A little help goes a long way toward maintaining independence. County senior citizens’ service funds help increase our resources for these services.

Meals Brought to You
Each year, over 5,000 seniors look forward to one of our 800,000 volunteer-delivered meals. The best part of the day may be the smiling volunteer coming through the door with a meal.

Help with the Basics
Our HomeWorks program helps with basic cleaning, meal preparation, and errands.

Help with Personal Care
Personal care helps with eating, dressing, grooming, bathing, walking, medication management, laundry, and meal preparation.

Our Caregiver Services
If you’re a caregiver, you need support. We help you know which direction to turn when managing your many concerns and overwhelming responsibilities. We offer a listening heart and an expertise about support services within the community. Our caregiver encouragement resources reassure and give hope.

Respite Care
Our respite programs provide care for loved ones to allow caregivers a few hours away for essential chores, their own healthcare needs, and mental wellness.
The birth of a special needs son was motivation for change in Winston’s life. Certain that it would take more than a high school football coach and shop teacher’s salary to meet his family’s needs, he created a successful insurance business. When Nixon’s wage freeze reduced insurance benefit packages, he moved again into an administrative position at the federal prison in Springfield, Missouri.

In 1972, a University of Missouri steering committee chose Winston to launch the newly created Lakes Country Regional Council. Ann Ruscha and Jim Summers, who became important figures in SeniorAge’s future, both served on the committee that hired Winston.

Shortly after Winston’s hire, Dorothy (Rambo) Knowles became his right-hand ‘man,’ and he mentored her into her own rite of leadership. In 1999 Winston retired, and can often be found on the golf courses—and serving on SeniorAge committees.

In 1989, Winston launched the SWMOA Foundation (now Senior Foundation of the Ozarks) to help assure the well being of our work within each community we serve. As a partner organization, the Foundation encourages community individuals and businesses to help support local senior services and senior centers through sponsorships, participation in fundraising events, and gift giving.

- Secured First Model Project
- President of MA5
- Coordinated First National AAA Conference
- First AAA to Fund In-Home Services
- Established Advocacy for Home-Owned Senior Centers
- First AAA to Establish Adult Day Cares
- First AAA to pass Senior Citizens’ Tax Fund (Lawrence and Stone)
- Built SWMOA (now SeniorAge) administrative office on Fort Avenue in Springfield

Winston Bledsoe
Executive Director
1972-1999
In 1972, 26-year-old Dorothy Rambo was working at Ozark Wholesale Grocers, routing trucks. When she read about a secretarial opening at a new Lakes Country Regional Council, she presented herself to the hiring committee and met her future boss Winston Bledsoe.

Winston gave Dorothy’s ego a big boost when he told her why he recommended her hire: “You were the only one who applied who wasn’t related to one of the committee members.”

But Dorothy quickly proved her value to the growth and success of the agency. After her first position as the Social Service Director, she worked her way through nearly all SeniorAge positions.

In 1977 she was appointed Deputy Director. In 1999 Dorothy accepted the baton of leadership for SeniorAge from her predecessor, mentor, and great friend Winston Bledsoe. She retired in 2013.

- Implemented Family Caregiver Programs
- Established Medicare D and Missouri RX Outreach
- Published First I & A Directory and Senior Solutions Directory
- President of MA4
- Expanded Case Management
- Successfully Supported the Passage of Eight Senior Service Tax Boards during her tenure
- Secured and Administered Greene, Stone, and Taney County Senior Service Tax Grants
- Chosen as one of Springfield’s Most Influential Women by 417 Magazine
Starr became involved in the Area Agency’s work in 1976 when her Aunt Nonie said, “Come with me tomorrow to serve meals at the Aurora Senior Citizens’ Center.” Her response was, “What’s a Senior Citizens’ Center?” But, of course, she went. Because Aunt Nonie said so.

Soon after, Starr’s mother, Irene Hamby, launched a 22-year career with the Area Agency, first as the local center’s Assistant Cook, then the Administrator, then the organization’s Information and Assistance Director. Starr, and her sister Deborah, served as support volunteers. Deborah continues as one of the organization’s most beloved volunteers to this day.

As a volunteer, Starr learned to appreciate and respect both Winston Bledsoe and Dorothy Knowles—two legends of the agency. She vividly recalls a day when she was 29, critically ill in the hospital, unable to see. Someone slipped into the room, leaned down to her ear, and said very kindly, “Starr, I’m Dorothy Knowles and I work with your mother. . . You’re a strong woman. You’ll get through this.”

Dorothy would repeat those life-giving words 17 years later when Starr’s husband was diagnosed with ALS. In the 17 intervening years Starr had continued as a volunteer, transitioning to a receptionist, grant writer, and Information and Assistance associate. Later, she completed her Masters in Organizational Leadership, moved into Resource Development, Foundation advocacy, Silver Haired Legislature, then Chief Operations.

Starr respects, daily, the foundation of her ‘legendary predecessors’ and the work done by colleagues in every position of the organization. She is committed to senior-centered services that meet seniors where they are, a workplace of team support, values that invest in the wellbeing of her colleagues and community, and mission sustainability in a business acumen world.

Starr speaks humbly of her path and the joy her daughter Teej continues to make to that journey.

Starr Kohler
Executive Director
2013 - Present
A Solid Foundation

The seniors who share our communities have compelling needs. Helping them often requires funding beyond federal and state assistance. In 1989, CEO Winston Bledsoe saw the need to establish the SWMOA Foundation. He was convinced this partnership could better assure the wellbeing of our work within each community.

As a partner organization, the Foundation encourages community individuals and businesses to help support local senior services and senior centers through sponsorships, participation in fundraising events, and gift giving. In 2016, the Foundation officially changed their name to Senior Foundation of the Ozarks.

Main events include an annual Fearless Aging Expo in the spring, a Fall Classic Golf Tournament in September, and a 5k/Christmas Mile Walk-Run in December. For more information on Senior Foundation of the Ozarks, visit their website at www.seniorfoundationmo.org.
Acronyms and Definitions

The following acronyms and terms are commonly used in our work. Definitions are, in part, taken from http://wikipedia.org and are provided in the context of our work.

**Advocacy**
To plead for or act on behalf of an individual or group to obtain a service or to assist older persons in maintaining their rights.

**AAA** *Area Agency on Aging* . . . That’s us! There are 629 in the U.S. — 10 of which are located in the state of Missouri.

**AoA** *Administration on Aging* The Older Americans Act established this federal agency. It distributes OAA grants annually to 57 state government and territorial SUAs and 230 Title VI Native American programs.

**DHSS** *Department of Health and Senior Services* is the state agency that channels federal funding to Missouri AAAs.

**HUD** The U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development is a U.S. cabinet department that now focuses primarily on housing.

**I&A** Information and Assistance Services include responding to questions and referring seniors to more in-depth care coordination when appropriate.

**MA4** Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging. (Previously MA5 - Missouri Alliance of AAA Administrators) The state voice for Missouri’s 10 AAAs. Its mission is to support the collaborative work of Missouri Area Agencies on Aging in developing full-range services.

**N4A** National Association of AAAs is the national voice for all AAAs.  www.n4a.org

**NAPIS** National Aging Program Information System is the software entry program for AAA service provider information and demographics.

**OAA** *Older Americans Act* established in 1965 embodies our nation’s commitment to support the dignity and independence of our older citizens.

**OATS** Originally the Older Adults Transportation System, OATS is now a transportation system for all ages, partially funded by AAAs.
**Ombudsman**  A volunteer who works to resolve disputes on behalf of residents in long-term care facilities without necessarily ascribing fault to individuals or administration.

**PSA**  **Planning and Service Area** is the geographical territory served. Our PSA is the 17 counties of southwest Missouri covering 10,000 square miles.

**RSVP**  **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program**, created in the 1969 by the OAA, this program supports the development of volunteer resources for local communities.

**SCSEP**  **Senior Community Service Employment Program** is a Title V program of the Older Americans Act.

**SMTS**  **Southeast Missouri Transportation System** is one of our transportation contract providers.

**SUA**  **State Unit on Aging**, the organization that receives federal OAA funds and distributes them to the state’s Area Agencies on Aging. In Missouri, the State Units on Aging is the Department of Health and Senior Services.

**SSA**  **Social Security Administration** is a federal agency that administers Social Security, a social insurance program for retirement, disability, and survivors’ benefits.

**SSI**  **Supplemental Security Income**, managed by SSA, makes payments to people with low income who are age 65 or older, visually impaired, or have a disability. SSI is paid for by U.S. Treasury general funds, not SS taxes or trust funds. The basic SSI amount is the same nationwide, but many states add money to the basic benefit.

**SWMOA**  **Southwest Missouri Office on Aging** . . . . Now SeniorAge! We are one of the 629 AAAs in the nation, one of 10 in the state of Missouri.

**501(c)**  A designation in the United States IRS Code that lists 27 types of non-profit exemptions from some federal income taxes. In Missouri, 501(c) organizations are also exempt from state tax. The number behind the (c) identifies the type of organization.

SeniorAge is a 501(c)3 organization. The ‘3’ refers to “various charitable, non-profit, religious, and educational organizations.”
SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging
Planning and Service Area

The following are the counties served by SeniorAge: Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Douglas, Greene, Howell, Lawrence, Oregon, Ozark, Polk, Shannon, Stone, Taney, Texas, Webster, and Wright
1. Starr Kohler, CEO.
   SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging
   1735 South Fort Avenue
   Springfield, MO 65807-1204
   (417) 862-0762
   www.seniorage.mo.org

2. Lana Johnson, Exec. Dir.
   Aging Matters
   1219 N. Kingshighway, Suite 100
   Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
   (573) 335-3331
   www.semoaa.org

3. Diane Hoemann, Exec. Dir.
   Care Connection
   106 W. Young Street, PO Box 1078
   Warrensburg, MO 64093
   (660) 747-3107
   www.goaging.org

4. Rebecca Flaherty
   Northwest MO AAA
   P.O. Box 265
   Albany, MO 64402
   (660) 726-3800
   www.nwmoaaa.org

5. Pam Windberg, Exec. Director
   Northeast MO AAA
   815 N. Osteopathy
   Kirksville, MO 63501
   (660) 665-4682
   www.nemoa.org

6. Jean Leonati, CEO
   Central MO AAA
   1121 Bus. Loop 70 E. Suite 2A
   Columbia, MO 65201
   (573) 443-5823
   www.cmaaa.net

7. James Stowe, Dir. of Aging Svrs.
   Mid-America Regional Council
   600 Broadway Ste. 200
   Kansas City, MO 64105-9990
   (816) 474-4240
   www.marc.org

8. Mary Schaefer, Exec. Director
   Mid-East MO AAA
   14535 Manchester
   Manchester, MO 63011-3690
   (636) 207-0847
   www.mideastaaa.org

   St. Louis AAA
   1520 Market St. Rm 4086
   St. Louis, MO 63103
   (314) 612-5918
   www.stlana.org

10. Stan Heater, Executive Dir.
    Region X AAA
    531 East 15th Street
    Joplin, MO 64803
    (417) 781-7562
    Fax 417-781-1609
    www.aaregionx.org

Updated 5/17
Alton Multi-Purpose Senior Center
204 S. Main, Box 403  65606  417-778-7342

Ash Grove Sunshine Center
310 Perryman, Box 72  65604  417-751-3826

Aurora - Heritage Harmony House
700 Hudson, P.O. Box 229  65605  417-678-5383

Ava Senior Center
109 N.E. Second, Box 1166  65608  417-683-5712

Bolivar - Polk County Senior Center
1850 W. Broadway  65613  417-326-5570

Branson Senior Center
201 Compton Drive  65616  417-335-4801

Buffalo - Engles Memorial Senior Center
103 Maples, Box 16  65622  417-345-8277

Cabool Satellite Center
515 Garst  65689  417-962-5983

Cabool Senior Center
910 Cherry  65689  417-962-3860

Cassville Senior Center
1111 Fair Street  65625  417-847-4510

Eminence Senior Center
108 Grey Jones, Box 513  65466  573-226-3839

Fair Grove Senior Center
122 S Orchard Blvd.  65648  417-833-4367

Forsyth - Senior Friendship Site
13879 Hwy. 160 N, Box 248  65653  417-546-6100

Gainesville - The Center
516 CR 800, Box 122  65655  417-679-4746

Greenfield - Dade County Senior Center
58 North Allison St.  65661  417-637-2626

Houston Senior Center
301 S. Grand  65483  417-967-4119

Humansville Senior Center
102 W. Tilden  65674  417-754-8303

Kimberling Area Senior Center
63 Kimberling, Box 873  65680  417-739-5242

Marshfield Senior Center
PO Box 305  65706  417-859-3555

Monett Senior Center
405 Dairy  65708  417-235-3285

Mt. Vernon Senior Center
425 N. Main, Box 51  65712  417-466-2072

Mtn. Grove Senior Center
700 East State St.  65711  417-926-5867

Mtn. View - R. Claude Trieman Senior Center
903 E. 5th St.  65548  417-934-6504

Nixa Senior Center
404 S. Main Street  65714  417-725-2322

Ozark Senior Center
727 N. 9th St., Box 681  65721  417-581-2538

Republic Senior Friendship Center
210 E. Hines  65738  417-732-7672

Rogersville Area Senior Center
197 Marshall, Box 52  65742  417-753-7800

Seymour Senior Center
205 Commercial, Box 26  65746  417-935-2211

Shell Knob - Central Crossing Senior Center
20801 YY-15 Rd., Box 707  65747  417-858-6952

Springfield: Northview
301 E. Talmage  65803  417-864-8606

Springfield: South Side
2215 S. Fremont  65804  417-890-1313

Strafford Senior Center
201 W. Bumgarner  65757  417-736-9898

Summersville Senior Citizens
129 Rogers Ave.  65571  417-932-4044

Thayer - Fun & Friends Senior Center
100 Chestnut, Box 222  65791  417-264-7354

West Plains Senior Citizens Center
416 East Main  65795  417-256-4055

Willow Springs Senior Center
501 Senior Center Lane  65588  573-325-4636

Winona Senior Center
212 Sapper St., Box 7  65588  573-325-4636
AND YOU HELP MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

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