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VOLUNTEER

IMPACT
REPORT



Introduction

The 2021 Volunteer Impact Report reflects the outstanding volunteer activity from statewide programs housed at the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability. Through our partnerships with the nine local Area Agencies on Aging and Disability, over 200 nutrition sites and more than 120 senior centers, we have gathered the data to share the tremendous impact our programs and volunteers have on the lives of older adults across Tennessee.

Our mission is to bring together and leverage programs, resources, and organizations to protect and ensure the quality of life and independence of older Tennesseans and adults with disabilities. Our volunteers help us to achieve this mission every day through their service and dedication to their local communities. We are excited for the future and to show each year the value of our volunteers and the programs they serve.



Dear volunteer,

Thank you for your extraordinary commitment to serving your fellow Tennesseans. During what has been a difficult time for many across our state, your generosity and willingness to serve has made lasting impacts in the lives of your neighbors. Because of your efforts, you are truly living out our nickname as the Volunteer State!

At a young age, my parents taught me the importance of serving others. In hopes of sharing that passion with others and helping people across our state, my office launched Tennessee Serves to engage Tennesseans in serving one another and their communities.

Since then, Tennessee Serves has been proud to partner with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability in caring for these individuals in our communities. Our team is grateful to have served alongside TCAD and its volunteers by sending letters of encouragement to senior citizens, participating in the Care through Conversation program, and sharing in the historic milestone of serving the commission's four millionth meal to older adults since the coronavirus pandemic began.

TCAD does amazing work to protect and ensure the quality of life and independence of older Tennesseans and adults with disabilities. This work would not be possible without the help of you—the volunteers.

I hope you will be as encouraged as I am reading through this report. Because of your efforts, more than 200,000 of our aging and disabled neighbors have received food, transportation, and other necessities.

While these may have seemed like simple acts at the time, I am confident they have made a tremendous difference in the lives of those around you.

Bill and I thank you for your work in meeting the needs of your fellow Tennesseans in 2021, and I hope you will continue to find ways to stay involved in the upcoming year.

With gratitude,

Maria Lee
First Lady of Tennessee

Care Through Conversation (CTC) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Care through Conversation seeks to promote social connectedness and positive interaction with Tennessee's older adults and caregivers. Volunteers' weekly calls to participants engage older adults in conversation and assess needs such as food or medication.

COVID Effects

This program was created during of the COVID-19 crisis as we saw an immediate need to reach older adults experiencing and at risk of social isolation. As the program has grown and evolved, we realized this was not just a program needed during a crisis. We have been able to help people find mental health resources, food, transportation, healthcare resource and so much more.

How to Volunteer

Volunteers in Tennessee must pass a basic background screening and sign an electronic Volunteer Confidentially Agreement. Once both steps have been complete the volunteer will receive the training for the program. After reviewing the training materials, the volunteer will let us know when they are ready to receive their matches.

For more information please contact Sidney Schuttrow at:

Sidney.Schuttrow@tn.gov or **615-741-1585**.

To register to be a volunteer visit our website at:

www.tn.gov/aging

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the publishing of this report was delayed and it's important to note this data reflects activity from January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020.



Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

141

Number of phone calls made

1,943

Number of Volunteers

88

Number of Volunteer Hours

446

Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) is a network of volunteer assisted transportation programs across Tennessee. These programs provide safe, reliable, affordable, door-through-door transportation for older adults to essential appointments. Programs are membership based and there is a minimal fee per ride, prices vary by region.

COVID Effects

COVID impacted SVTN by limiting the hands on assistance that we were able to provide to our clients. We were not allowed to sit with them at the doctor's office anymore and shopping became a challenge. However, the programs adjusted and implemented COVID protocols to keep the drivers and riders safe. The programs also adjusted and began providing errand services to keep the clients safe but still providing them with essential items like food, medication and cleaning supplies.

How to Volunteer

Volunteers in Tennessee are needed in all programs. Volunteers are literally the driving force of SVTN, without our volunteers we would not have been able to assist as many older adults. Volunteers are screened, background checked and trained prior to taking their first trip. Requirements include:

- (1) Must have a working vehicle,
- (2) Must be at least 21 years old (Some programs allow 18+),
- (3) Must be able to pass a background check, and
- (4) Must have a valid driver license and insurance.

For more information please contact Glenda Temple at gtemple@swtdd.org or **1-844-803-0169** or visit: www.tn.gov/aging

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Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

955

Number of trips provided

19,413

Number of Volunteers

615

Number of Volunteer Hours

17,373

Number of miles driven

244,958

Number of programs reporting

19

Senior Center Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Senior centers are a focal point for local communities, providing information, social opportunities, and vital community services that can help older adults stay healthy and independent.

COVID Effects

All of the senior center's offices were closed due to the pandemic. This did not stop the staff and volunteers from making sure their member received the care and services they needed. Many innovative programs were developed, or current programs expanded upon to provide a community of support. Everything from expanding meal delivery, implementing virtual programs, conducting drive-thru or outdoor event and growing telephone reassurance programs were essential in ensuring older adults in their local communities were being taken care of during this difficult time.

How to Volunteer

There are many ways senior centers can utilize volunteers ranging from helping at the front desk, programming, special events, meal preparation and much more. There is at least one senior center in every county of Tennessee that could use your help in making sure older adults in your community have somewhere to go to be active, socialize and receive assistance with services.

Each center has its own needs for volunteers, so we encourage you contact a senior center in your area. For more information on finding your local senior center please visit our website at: www.tn.gov/aging

Program Statistics

Number of older adults screening for assistance and benefits

15,669

Number of older adults who attending educational events

19,705

Number of older adults who were assisted with transportation

3,210

Number of older adults who participated in exercise programs

7,029

Number of older adults who participated in recreation activities

27,681

Number of older adults who were assisted in getting groceries/household items

1,464

Number of Volunteers

2,132

Number of Volunteer Hours

51,851

Long-Term Ombudsman Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program provides all Tennesseans residing in licensed nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and homes for the aged assistance with resolving complaints they may have with their care. The Ombudsman will advocate for the wishes of the resident and ensure that he or she is safe and receiving proper care.

Trained volunteer representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program visit residents in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities and establish a regular presence in the facility. They provide information about resident rights, quality of care, and quality of life to residents and family members. Volunteers also observe conditions, advocate for residents, and handle simple complaints.

COVID Effects

COVID-19 restricted the Ombudsman Program from entering facilities from March 13, 2020 through the duration of the year. As a safety precaution, we suspended VORs from entering the facility as representatives of the program as well. As a result, volunteers took on a myriad of tasks to support residents through activities included but not limited to making masks for residents; providing telephone reassurance; researching articles; and translating documents. The program adapted to an online meeting and training format conducting activities virtually where possible.

How to Volunteer

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has a volunteer application for all nine regions of the state. To obtain an application to become a volunteer please contact the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at **ombudsman.notification@tn.gov**.

We also recommend you review the Volunteer Ombudsman Representative (VOR) job description to learn more about what volunteer responsibilities include.

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Program Statistics

Number of Volunteers



73

Number of Volunteer Hours



985.43

Number of older adults served:



9,652

Average age of VORs



72

TCAD Nutrition Program Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The Aging Nutrition program provides meals, socialization, and nutrition education and counseling to adults age 60 and over. These services are provided in 200+ congregate settings (such as senior centers or senior housing), as well as to homebound older adults in all 95 Tennessee counties. Good nutrition is critical to supporting independent and healthy aging. Many barriers can keep older adults from maintaining good nutrition, including lack of financial resources, poor transportation options, limited mobility, declining physical and mental health, and social isolation.

COVID Effects

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, TCAD had to close all congregate dining sites and switch to an all to-go pick up, and home delivered meal model. We were able to use small businesses, including restaurants, caterers and meal prep companies to serve as alternative food providers during this time which helped us grow in capacity when it was needed most. It also helped many small businesses stay in operation during the decrease in their normal business.

How to Volunteer

Many Volunteer opportunities are available to work with both our congregate meal program and our home delivered meal programs in every county statewide. For more information you can visit our website at: www.tn.gov/aging



Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

35,838

Number of meals served

3.3M

Number of Volunteers

3,991

Number of Volunteer Hours

169,846

Public Guardian Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The Tennessee Public Guardianship for the Elderly program ensures the health and welfare of some of the state's most vulnerable residents by serving as the court-appointed guardian for individuals age 60 and over who, due to physical or mental limitations, are unable to make personal decisions regarding their health and financial resources.

COVID Effects

As with many of our programs, in-person activities were suspended to ensure the safety of the people we serve. Staff and volunteers quickly used their creativity to continue their vital roles by conducting telephone or virtual visits and letter/card writing campaigns to keep spirits lifted and provide the connection we all need.

How to Volunteer

A volunteer with the Public Guardian Program must be 18 years or older, have a valid driver's license, pass a background screening and demonstrate honesty, integrity, compassion and caring for the elderly.

For more information please contact Mary Lee at **Mary.R.Lee@tn.gov** or visit our website at: **www.tn.gov/aging**



Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

154

Number of phone calls made

184

Number of Volunteers

44

Number of Volunteer Hours

766

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) is an evidence-based fall prevention program that focuses on strength, balance, and fitness with a goal of reducing falls in class participants.

COVID Effects

While COVID has caused SAIL classes to be suspended in many locations, many of our leaders have gotten creative. We have classes being conducted virtually and in outdoor settings on nice days. The program has adapted to an online training format for new volunteer leaders so when facilities are able to open again new classes will be available in multiple new counties.

How to Volunteer

Volunteers in Tennessee must meet three requirements to become a Certified SAIL Leader:

- (1) Must be CPR certified
- (2) Must have a current fitness certification or equivalent degree and
- (3) Must agree to teach class 2-3 days a week.

For more information please contact Sidney Schuttrow at **Sidney.Schuttrow@tn.gov** or **615-741-1585** or visit our website at: **www.tn.gov/aging**

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

1,664

Number of classes conducted

1,464

Hours of exercises

21,071

Number of Volunteers

54

Number of Volunteer Hours

2,488

Tennessee Music Intervention Navigating Dementia Symptoms (TN M.I.N.D.S.) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Music volunteers with the TN MINDS program assist individuals with dementia living in the community and their caregivers. Volunteers work with individuals with dementia to create personalized playlists to help manage dementia symptoms. Caregivers attend Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes with trained class leaders to learn key skills such as time management and self-care.

COVID Effects

While COVID caused a delay in TN M.I.N.D.S. implementation, the program has transitioned to offer a fully virtual model! We are now able to offer TN M.I.N.D.S. to individuals remotely by providing tablets and service. However, we will be offering in-person programming again once it is safe to do so.

How to Volunteer

TN M.I.N.D.S. is being implemented in 5 districts: Northwest, Greater Nashville, Upper Cumberland, South Central, and First Tennessee. Any adult in one of the 5 target districts who completes required virtual training and paperwork can be a music volunteer. A background in music or working with older adults is preferred.

For more information please contact Keita Cole at **Keita.Cole@tn.gov** or visit online at **www.tn.gov/aging**

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

17

Number of caregivers served

14

Number of Volunteers

4

Number of Volunteer Hours

30

Number of music sessions

60

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Tennessee State Health Insurance Assistance Program (TN SHIP) provides free and unbiased Medicare counseling to Medicare eligible Tennesseans and their loved ones.

COVID Effects

Before COVID, TN SHIP staff and volunteers hosted in-person Medicare counseling and enrollment events and attended various health fairs, senior centers, and community centers across the state. Once lockdown began, TN SHIP staff and volunteers made the switch to online and virtual events, providing counseling via phone, email, and web conferencing. Since COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, we plan on continuing our virtual efforts to reach beneficiaries, in addition to hosting face to face events and counseling opportunities.

How to Volunteer

To become a TN SHIP Volunteer, you must:

- (1)** Complete the TN SHIP volunteer application
- (2)** Attend training with your regional SHIP staff, and
- (3)** Contribute a minimum of 8 hours monthly to the program.

For more information please contact Olayinka Kasunmu at **Olayinka.Kasunmu@tn.gov** or **615-532-9002** or visit our website at: **www.tn.gov/aging**

Program Statistics

Number of Medicare Beneficiaries served

105,728

Number of Counseling Hours Conducted

18,658

Number of Group Outreach Hours

961

Number of Volunteers

422

Number of Total Volunteer Hours

25,650

Number of Medicare Low Income Subsidy Completed

1,575

Number of Medicare Savings Programs
Applications Submitted

3,196

Number of Prescription Drug Plan Applications Submitted

3,403

Number of Medicare Advantage Plans
Applications Submitted

473



Dear volunteer,

Over 200 years ago, our state gained its nickname as the Volunteer State through our commitment of soldiers during the War of 1812. Though we have not been on the frontlines of battle, over the past 20 months, we have all waged a war against a virus that has drastically transformed the way we live, work, and interact with our friends, family, and fellow Tennesseans.

Despite this trying time, you have gone above and beyond to ensure the needs of some of our most vulnerable Tennesseans are met. With over 215,000 hours served, you helped foster a spirit of kindness and hope in communities across our state when it was needed most.

Through our Volunteer Impact Report, the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD) recognizes the countless individuals who selflessly invest in the lives of others. These unsung heroes helped us expand the capacity of our programs like never before.

Though I am still in my first six months leading TCAD, I am truly impressed with the ability our volunteers have to make an impact. This past year, you made extraordinary contributions to individuals, families, neighborhoods, communities, and our state.

You have surpassed my expectations, and I encourage you to keep up the great work and help us break the volunteer records set this year.

Civic engagement and volunteer service are at the heart of the American spirit and ultimately strengthen the fabric of our state. To the men and women of all ages who devoted their time, talent, and resources to the greater good—TCAD salutes you.

With many thanks,

James Dunn
TCAD Executive Director

