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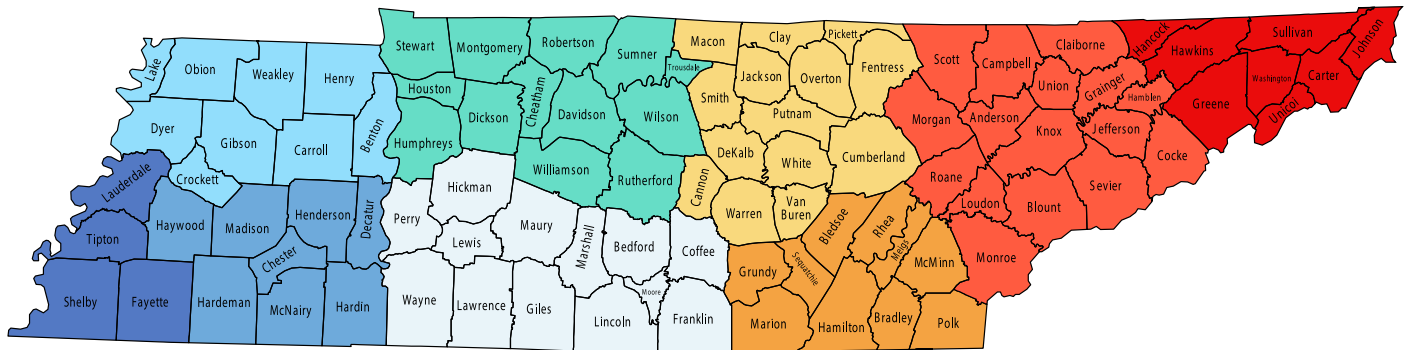
VOLUNTEER IMPACT REPORT

Introduction

The *2023 Volunteer Impact Report* reflects the outstanding volunteer activity from statewide programs housed at the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability. This year we also invited special projects to be submitted by our regional partners to include in the report. Through our partnerships with the nine local Area Agencies on Aging and Disability, over 200 nutrition sites, more than 20 transportation programs and nearly 200 senior centers, we have gathered the data to share the tremendous impact our program staff 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.

Data in this report reflects activity from January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022.



ACMS AAAD

Kim Daugherty, Director
160 N. Main 3rd Floor
Memphis, TN 38103
901-222-4150 FAX: 901-222-4199



First Tennessee AAAD

Angie Gwaltney, Director
3211 North Roan Street
Johnson City, TN 37601-1213
423-928-3258 FAX 423-926-8291



Southwest Tennessee AAAD

Jessica P. Rice, Director
102 East College Street
Jackson, TN 38301-6202
731-668-6413 FAX: 731-668-6444



East Tennessee AAAD

Aaron Bradley, Director
9111 Cross Park Drive, Suite D100
Knoxville, TN 37923-4517
865-251-4897 FAX: 865-691-2555



Northwest Tennessee AAAD

Julie Jones, Director
124 Weldon Drive
Martin, TN 38237-1308
731-587-4213 FAX: 731-588-5833



Southeast Tennessee AAAD

Criss Grant, Director
1000 Riverfront Parkway
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2103
423-266-5781 FAX: 423-424-4225



Greater Nashville AAAD

Sara Fowler, Director
44 Vantage Way, Suite 450
Nashville, TN 37228
615-862-8828 FAX: 615-862-8840



Upper Cumberland AAAD

Holly Williams, Director
1104 England Drive
Cookeville, TN 38501
931-432-4111 FAX: 931-432-8112



South Central Tennessee AAAD

Joe Evans, Director
101 Sam Watkins Boulevard
Mount Pleasant, TN 38474-4024
931-379-2929 FAX: 931-379-2685



Dear Volunteer,

In 1991, President George H. W. Bush established April as National Volunteer Month, but the truth is, since the beginning of our State's inception, our citizens have shown a culture of service. It is why we are the Volunteer State!

Each year I look forward to our Volunteer Impact Report coming out because it paints a picture of the powerful effect our network of volunteers has on the older adult population here in Tennessee. I get the personal privilege of showing this report to stakeholders, lawmakers, and other interested parties as I meet with them throughout the year. They are constantly impressed by the accomplishments and acts of service each of you contribute.

The latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that our nation's older adults lead the way in time spent volunteering. I greatly respect older adults serving their peers and admire younger Tennesseans who devote their time serving the Greatest Generation. No matter your age, I am immensely thankful for your commitment to one another.

Whether it is delivering meals, taking someone to a medical appointment, or calling an older Tennessean to help them save on their Medicare, each of you selflessly donate your time and resources.

Year after year, the volunteer network you represent continues to surpass expectations. Last year, over 9,000 volunteers donated their time and personal resources to at least one program. With 372,000 hours of service completed, you all rendered over \$11 million of in-kind contributions.

We could not perform the work needed to support our seniors, disabled adults, and families in crisis without your help. The fact of the matter is, without our volunteers, we could not fulfill our mission.

From all of us here at the State Unit on Aging, thank you for everything you do to care for those we serve. Your hard work and generosity do not go unnoticed.

With much appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" and last name "Dunn" clearly distinguishable.

James Dunn
Executive Director

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.

Program Successes

The rides provided by staff and well screened, trusted volunteers give a sense of freedom and dignity back to people that are over 60 and cannot drive. Volunteers will often go above and beyond to help riders with needs outside of providing transportation. The volunteer driver may be the only person the rider sees or has communication with and is a great source of social connectedness. This program provides more than just a ride to the doctor, grocery store, salon, or pharmacy, it is a lifeline to keep older adults independent and active in their community.

"Best thing that could have happened for me." – Rider

"A very valuable service to have that is dependable and safe for people who need it." – Rider

"It's been a lifesaver for me." – Rider

"Love being a driver—and comforting knowing when/if my time comes to need a ride it is available."
– Volunteer

How to Volunteer

Our volunteer drivers do more than just drive, they are a listening ear, a hand to hold, a smile when someone is down, and a friendly face. Volunteers are literally the driving force behind SVTN. Volunteers are screened, background checked, and trained prior to taking their first trip. Requirements include:

- must have a working vehicle
- must be at least 21 years old (some programs allow 18+)
- must be able to pass a background check
- must have a valid driver license and insurance

For more information, please visit www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

1,312

Number of trips provided

23,904

Number of miles driven

328,937

Number of programs reporting

21

Number of volunteers

609

Number of volunteer hours

25,455

Volunteer Ombudsman Representative Program Impact

Program Background

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program provides Tennesseans an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people living in 700+ long-term care facilities statewide. Volunteer Ombudsman Representatives (VORs) are an essential part of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman team, working closely with staff Ombudsmen to advocate for long-term care residents' rights. VORs serve residents by establishing a regular presence in their homes, getting to know them and their individual preferences, and modeling good person-centered practices. They also support Ombudsman staff resolving resident complaints and help residents to expect excellence in their care.

Program Successes

Ombudsmen know that having a regular facility presence means residents have better access to advocacy services, and VORs play a large role in increasing the number of visits made and lives touched. As the program rebounds from the significant challenges faced over the last few years by the long-term care residents, dedicated VORs maintain their passion for advocacy:

"As a VOR for more than 11 years, I have always enjoyed my resident visits. Sometimes our conversations are funny, sometimes they are meaningful, but always they have enriched my soul."

"I feel that I receive much more from the residents of long-term care and assisted living facilities than the time that I give. It is an honor to be their advocate."

"I have the opportunity to make the facility a better place for the residents. I have the ability to ensure people are treated with dignity and respect. If I help one person each visit, I truly appreciate my role as an ombudsman. If you believe one person can change someone's world, you should be a VOR."

How to Volunteer

We encourage those interested to read the VOR job description that is available for review on the TCAD website at [**www.tn.gov/aging**](http://www.tn.gov/aging). Initial VOR certification training is 36 hours and includes a mix of classroom, self-study, and field training. Trainings are conducted on an as-needed basis at the district level. All prospective volunteers are subject to a background check and screening for conflicts of interest.

To learn more about, and start, the process of becoming a VOR, please contact the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at [**ombudsman.notification@tn.gov**](mailto:ombudsman.notification@tn.gov).

Program Statistics

Number of volunteers

81

Number of volunteer hours

2,357

Number of facility
visits by volunteers

863

Nutrition Program Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The TCAD Aging Nutrition Program provides meals, socialization, nutrition education, and nutrition counseling to Tennesseans age 60 and over. These services are provided in over 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.

Program Successes

The TCAD Aging Nutrition Program served more meals in 2022 than ever before in its 50-year history. This was largely due to the amazing network of volunteers and their continued support of the program and the older adults in their communities. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was able to maintain our volunteer base, and, in some areas, increase the number of volunteers. Without the support of the community volunteers, programs like this one would not have the impact that it does on older Tennesseans.

In the fall of 2022, TCAD completed a nutrition survey to determine the unmet needs for our nutrition clients. This survey provided great insight into the needs of nutrition clients across Tennessee and the areas to focus on to provide the best service possible. Results include:

- Age Range of Respondents – 22 years old to 104 years old (average age 75)
- Respondents from 93 of 95 counties across the state
- Top 3 reasons respondents do not regularly attend congregate meal locations
 - (1) Homebound
 - (2) Transportation
 - (3) Other (social anxiety and/or COVID anxiety)

How to Volunteer

Many volunteer opportunities are available to work with both our congregate meal sites and our home-delivered meal programs in every county statewide.

For more information, please visit www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

67,390

Number of meals served

3.4M

Number of volunteers

4,832

Number of volunteer hours

221,404

Total respondents to the 2022 Nutrition Survey

4,591

Percentage of survey respondents
who live alone

60%

Percentage satisfied with food served

73%

Tennessee Public Guardianship for the Elderly 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.

Program Successes

After nearly two years, the Public Guardianship Program was able to successfully resume in-person visits as of January 2021. In-person visitation is important for many of our public guardian clients who have no family or friends to visit them. Without visitation they are at risk for the following:

- social isolation
- loneliness
- increased risk of depression, anxiety, and expression of distress
- higher risks for high blood pressure, heart disease, and even death
- cognitive decline.

How to Volunteer

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

For more information, please visit our website www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

451

Number of visits conducted

417

Number of volunteers

67

Number of volunteer hours

700

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 for participants.

Program Successes

We have continued to see growth in the program, even after funding concluded, due to sustainability measures put in place and new leadership joining the SAIL team. The University of Tennessee Medical Center has joined the program as the new statewide coordinating agency. Vanderbilt Medical Center has also become a valuable partner for collecting and analyzing program data. These two new partners, combined with the foundation set up through the Knox County Health Department and the East Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability, will allow SAIL to continue its mission to prevent falls in older adults for many years to come.

How to Volunteer

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

- must be CPR certified
- must have a current fitness certification or equivalent degree
- must agree to teach class 2-3 days a week (can be year-round or in 12-week sessions or substitute as needed for an already established SAIL class)

*For more information, please contact Debi Tuggle at **Dtuggle@utmck.edu** or **865-300-3672**.*

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

1,474

Number of classes conducted

2,623

Hours of exercise

46,080

Number of volunteers

35

Number of volunteer hours

5,246

Tennessee Person-Centered Music Program (TPCMP) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The Tennessee Person-Centered Music Program offers residents at participating Tennessee nursing homes individualized music as part of their care. The program is funded by a 4-year Civil Monetary Penalty Grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services through the Health Facilities Commission from February 1, 2019 - June 30, 2023.

Program Successes

TPCMP has grown significantly over the last year due to the outstanding work of the staff, volunteers, program coaches, and partners. Nursing home residents participating in the program have shown improved quality of life, and staff have received valuable tools to better the lives of residents. Volunteers have witnessed firsthand the valuable impact music can have for someone with Alzheimer's and other related dementias.

"Volunteering for TPCMP has brought a new sense of meaning and joy to my life. It's been amazing to witness how the residents come to life when listening to their favorite music. I always come away from music sessions feeling rejuvenated and grateful. It's an honor for me to participate in this innovative program and to watch people heal through the power of music." – Volunteer

"The TPCMP is the greatest part of my job! Having music makes everyone's week!"
– Nursing Home Program Coach

"I would suggest that they participate in the TPCMP and get their loved one into it because I can see a big difference in just what they've been doing with [the resident]!"
– Family Member of Participating Nursing Home Resident

"I grew up on that music!" – Participating Nursing Home Resident

How to Volunteer

Volunteer opportunities are offered virtually and can be done remotely, so there is no need to travel. The first step to become a TPCMP Music Manager is to complete the volunteer application. It is strongly encouraged to review the TPCMP Music Manager volunteer role description to learn essential duties, responsibilities, and time commitment for this role.

For more information, please contact Amanda Boulware at amanda.boulware@tn.gov, 615-253-5206, or visit www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of nursing home residents served

542

Number of participating nursing homes

99

Number of songs that elicited
positive responses for residents

21,680

Number of volunteers

240

Number of volunteer hours

2,570

Reduction in reliance on medications
(e.g. antipsychotics, antianxiety, and sedative hypnotic)

34.7%

Reduction in adverse behavioral symptoms

80%

Decrease in resident's anxiety

77.6%

Increase in resident's quality of life

85.7%

Decrease in resident rehospitalization

26.2%

Program coaches found TPCMP to provide them with
additional tools/resources for assisting residents

100%

Tennessee State Health Insurance Assistance Program (TN SHIP) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The Tennessee State Health Insurance Assistance Program (TN SHIP) is a federally funded program that provides free and unbiased counseling and assistance to Tennessee's Medicare-eligible individuals, their families, and caregivers. TN SHIP does not promote any insurance agency, and it maintains confidentiality with all clients. Whether you are new to Medicare or a seasoned beneficiary, trained SHIP counselors can assist you with any and all of your Medicare needs.

Program Successes

This year, TN SHIP volunteers provided our services to Medicare beneficiaries in Tennessee through virtual and in-person counseling, application assistance, and at outreach events across the state. Even though our program lost volunteers this year, our program saw an increase of 9.47% in total volunteer hours and an increase of 11.39% in the number of applications submitted for Medicare beneficiaries to receive assistance with the costs associated with their health care.

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.
- (3)** Contribute a minimum of 8 hours monthly to the program.

*For more information, please contact **tn.ship@tn.gov**, **877-801-0044**, visit **www.tn.gov/aging**.*

Program Statistics

Number of Medicare
beneficiaries served

89,615

Number of Medicare low-income
assistance applications submitted

4,635

Number of volunteers

470

Number of volunteer hours

40,292

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.

Program Successes

Your local senior center is the place to connect with older adults in your community. There is at least one center in every county of Tennessee with a variety of games, recreation, exercise, and activities to keep you active and engaged. Many centers are also nutrition sites, so you can enjoy a meal and the company of the many friends you will make. Staff and volunteers work extremely hard to make the center a welcoming place for everyone and assist with unmet needs as best they can. Come enjoy the countless offerings and sense of community at the senior center in your area!

How to Volunteer

There are many ways senior centers can utilize volunteers, ranging from helping at the front desk, becoming a board member, leading classes/activities, assisting with fundraising and special events, to meal preparation and much more. With at least one location in all 95 counties, you would not have to travel far to give back to your community and serve older adults.

Each center has its own volunteer needs, so we encourage you to reach out to the senior center in your area. For more information on finding your local senior center, visit our website at:

www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adult participants
at senior centers

60,587

Number of older adults screened for assistance
and benefits

4,359

Number of older adults who attended
educational events

21,933

Number of older adults who were assisted
with transportation

3,775

Number of older adults who participated in
evidence-based exercise programs

3,507

Number of older adults who participated in
recreation activities

33,190

Number of older adults who were reached
through telephone reassurance and visits

4,183

Number of older adults reached through
outreach and advocacy efforts

5,712

Number of volunteers

2,724

Number of volunteer hours

143,605

Special Projects

Santas for Seniors Impact

Program Background

For most of us, the holidays are a wonderful time to share the joys of family and friendships. However, this is not the case for many older adults. Not everyone is fortunate enough to celebrate the holiday with family and friends. Many seniors are alone and isolated, especially during the holidays. Several home-delivered meal recipients mentioned they had not received or unwrapped a Christmas gift in more than fifty years. In 2016, Santas for Seniors was started as a way to combat the effects of loneliness and isolation.

Program Successes

The initial goal was to collect enough Santa Bags to ensure each senior on at least one home-delivered meal route received a bag. In 2022, this number grew to 1,952, with enough bags for meal recipients and other older adults enrolled in the Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability's home and community-based service program. This project has been a great outreach opportunity. Although most Santas initially sign up to assist with the gift bags, many of them volunteer in other ways throughout the entire year.

How to Volunteer

To volunteer, please contact the Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability at 1-866-836-6678 or visit their website at www.setaaad.org.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

1,952

Number of Santa Bags donated

1,952

Number of volunteers

1,000

Number of volunteer hours

3,000

GNRC Letter Writing Campaign Impact

Program Background

The Greater Nashville Regional Council's (GNRC) Letter Writing Campaign started in April 2020 to increase social connectedness to older adults in the Middle Tennessee area. Since the program's inception, 64,332 letters have been sent to older adults and disabled individuals in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Countless messages have been received about how this small token has made someone's day and the kindness shown has put smiles on everyone's faces.

Program Successes

This campaign has been able to utilize individuals, groups, and corporate teams to continue to expand its impact over the last three years. In the last quarter of 2022, volunteers wrote 9,922 letters!

"Words can never express how much hope the letters have provided to our residents during the pandemic. The residents are really inspired when they receive cards from the volunteers. The residents enjoy them! Please continue sending them! Thank you for all you do to make our senior and disabled residents smile!" – Ava

"Just a note to let you know I spoke to two members so far this morning who got the cards from GNRC's volunteers and they were very much appreciated! I expect to speak to many more happy seniors!" – Lucille

"Thank you so much for sending the letters. Our residents are looking forward to them, and I continue hearing how they make someone's day when I give them out. A huge thank you to your awesome volunteers!" – Hope

How to Volunteer

The GNRC Letter Writing Campaign is done year-round, and letters are sent monthly. Individuals, civic groups, schools, and corporations are all welcome to be a part of this impactful regionwide program.

For more information, contact Rebecca Nofi at rnofi@gnrc.org, 615-891-5876, or visit www.gnrc.org/volunteer.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

1,800

Number of letters sent

22,724

Number of letters sent since the
start of the campaign in April 2020

64,332

Number of volunteer hours

8,245

Volunteer Impact

Year	Older Adults Served	Volunteers	Volunteer Hours
2022	225,123	10,070	452,899
2021	209,759	9,183	372,733
2020	201,535	7,423	269,435

