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VOLUNTEER IMPACT
REPORT

Year in Review

Through our programs administered across the state, we have been able to help:



91,824 people receive free, non-biased counseling to help navigate their Medicare health insurance benefits.



63,957 people participate in a variety of health, social, nutritional, recreational and educational programs at their local senior center.



29,081 people receive a free, nutritious meal delivered to their home or served at a local congregate meal site.



13,703 residents in long-term care facilities were assisted by an advocate to ensure they feel seen, heard and are treated with dignity.



2,201 people benefit from a ride to essential appointments in their local community.

Our regional partners have expanded the ability to provide programs and services through special projects in their areas:



4,194 people reduce their risk of falls through an evidence-based strength, balance, and fitness program.



1,639 people in long-term care and assisted living facilities receive handwritten letters and cards that lifted spirits and brought smiles to faces.



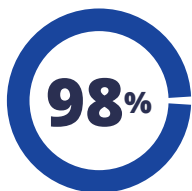
1,535 people unwrap a gift around the holidays to help combat loneliness and isolation.

Volunteers are the key to our success!

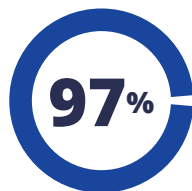
In partnership with staff statewide, volunteers' dedication to their communities enables our programs to deliver vital services, expand our reach, and serve more older adults each year.

Year	Older adults served	Volunteers	Meals provided	Trips provided	Medicare Assistance Applications
2025	220,721	13,506	3.0 million	37,503	4,976
2024	219,877	13,100	3.5 million	35,156	5,567
2023	207,528	11,989	3.5 million	35,576	5,327
2022	207,247	10,070	3.4 million	23,904	4,635
2021	228,305	9,183	3.7 million	22,567	4,107
2020	204,626	7,423	3.3 million	19,413	1,565

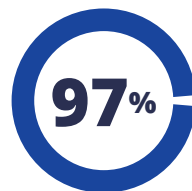
For the second year in a row, volunteers from across the state raised their voices to help shape the future of our programs. By listening, improving, and growing together, we can strengthen our programs, expand our reach, and ensure even more older adults receive the support they need.



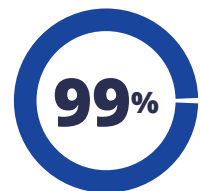
feel like a valued member of the volunteer team.



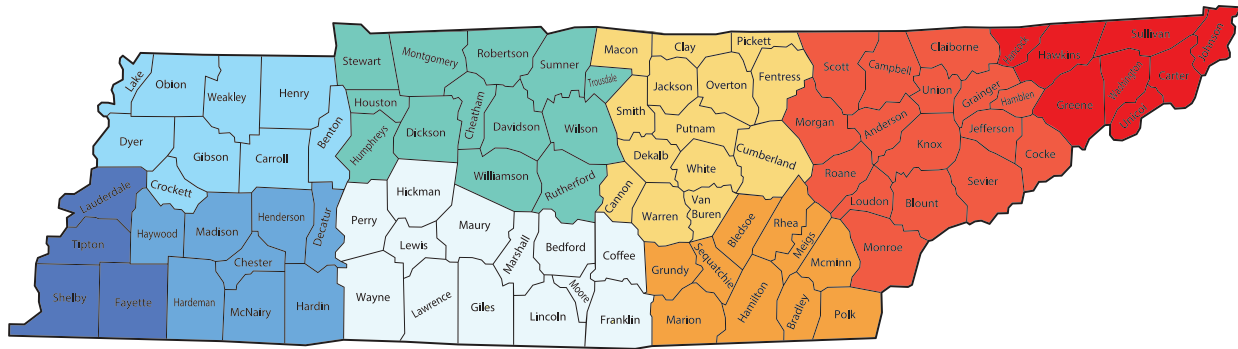
are satisfied with their volunteer experience.



feel they are making a positive impact on the people they serve.



will continue volunteer service in 2026.



ACMS AAAD
 160 N. Main 3rd Floor
 Memphis, TN 38103
 901-222-4150

First Tennessee AAAD
 3211 North Roan Street
 Johnson City, TN 37601-1213
 423-928-3258

Southwest Tennessee AAAD
 102 East College Street
 Jackson, TN 38301-6202
 731-668-6413

East Tennessee AAAD
 911 Cross Park Drive, Suite D100
 Knoxville, TN 37923-4517
 865-251-4897

Northwest Tennessee AAAD
 124 Weldon Drive
 Martin, TN 38237-1308
 731-587-4213

Southeast Tennessee AAAD
 1000 Riverfront Parkway
 Chattanooga, TN 37402-2103
 423-266-5781

Greater Nashville AAAD
 44 Vantage Way, Suite 450
 Nashville, TN 37228
 615-862-8828

Upper Cumberland AAAD
 1104 England Drive
 Cookeville, TN 38501
 931-432-4111

South Central Tennessee AAAD
 101 Sam Watkins Boulevard
 Mount Pleasant, TN 38474-4024
 931-379-2929

Dear Volunteer,

Since its inception, Tennessee and its residents have embodied a spirit of service, earning the well-deserved title of the Volunteer State. Each April, as we recognize National Volunteer Month, I am reminded of the incredible impact that our volunteers have on our communities, especially among our older adult population.

This is my first year as Commissioner of our Aging Division, and I've eagerly anticipated the release of this year's Volunteer Impact Report. This report showcases the immense impact volunteers have on the lives of older Tennesseans. I have the honor of sharing this report with stakeholders, lawmakers, and community leaders, all of which are consistently inspired by the dedication and achievements of our volunteers.



Recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics highlights an interesting trend: older adults are leading the charge in volunteerism across the nation. Not only that but according to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, older adults who volunteer about two hours each week have better physical and mental health outcomes than those who don't regularly do volunteering activities. I deeply admire all volunteers – older adults who dedicate their time to support their peers as well as younger generations who step up to assist. This collective commitment, regardless of age, is commendable.

Whether you are delivering meals, providing transportation to daily activities such as medical appointments or grocery stores, or offering guidance to help older Tennesseans navigate Medicare, your contributions make a meaningful impact. According to projections by the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2034, older adults are expected to outnumber children under 18 for the first time in history. I am confident that with your help, we will continue to meet the needs of this rapidly changing demographic.

Your efforts play a key part in our mission to support older adults and individuals with disabilities. For some older adults, your volunteer efforts may be the only social interaction they receive. The generosity of your efforts inspires confidence that we all have a role to play in improving our communities.

Thank you for being an exemplary citizen and volunteer for Tennessee. You embody the very best of our state and way of life. I sincerely appreciate all that you do for the populations we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Brad Turner, Commissioner of DDA

Program Statistics

29,081

Number of older adults served

3.0M

Number of meals served

19,406

Number of food boxes distributed

6,288

Number of volunteers

221,983

Number of volunteer hours

Nutrition Program Volunteer Impact

Program Overview

The DDA Nutrition Program supports Tennesseans age 60 and older by providing nutritious meals, opportunities for social connection, and access to nutrition education and counseling. Designed to reduce food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition while promoting overall health and well-being, the program serves older adults through more than 150 community-based sites such as senior centers and housing facilities and delivers meals directly to homes across all 95 counties.

Achievements

In 2025, the DDA Nutrition Program strengthened its partnerships with local Tennessee farmers to deliver fresh food boxes to older adults in rural communities, expanding access to nutritious, locally grown produce. This initiative has had a meaningful impact by reaching individuals who might otherwise lack access to fresh foods, while the collaboration with farmers and senior centers continues to drive the program's success and long-term sustainability.

How to volunteer

Many volunteer opportunities are available to work with both congregate meal sites and our home delivered meal programs in every county statewide. For more information, please visit: <https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging.html>.



2026 VOLUNTEER IMPACT REPORT

Program Statistics

91,824

Number of Medicare beneficiaries served

90,107

Number of Medicare beneficiaries assisted with enrollment into health insurance coverage

4,976

Number of Medicare low-income assistance applications submitted

335

Number of volunteers

50,720

Number of total volunteer hours

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

Program Overview

The Tennessee State Health Insurance Assistance Program (TN SHIP) is a federally funded resource offering free, unbiased counseling to Medicare-eligible Tennesseans, as well as their families and caregivers. Committed to confidentiality and free from affiliation with any insurance agency, TN SHIP's trained counselors provide trusted, personalized guidance to support individuals at every stage of their Medicare journey.

Achievements

Tennessee's SHIP program delivered significant impact in 2025, assisting 91,824 Medicare beneficiaries with health insurance enrollment while expanding access to critical guidance statewide. Fueled by 335 dedicated volunteers who contributed 50,720 hours, the program dramatically strengthened its outreach and reach.

How to volunteer

To become a TN SHIP Volunteer, you must:

- complete the TN SHIP volunteer application.
- attend training with your regional SHIP staff.
- contribute a minimum of 8 hours monthly to the program.

For more information, please contact dda.ship@tn.gov or **1-877-801-0044** or visit: <https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging.html>.



2026 VOLUNTEER IMPACT REPORT

Program Statistics

63,957

Number of older adult participants at senior centers

17,903

Number of older adults who participated in recreation activities

3,906

Number of older adults reached through physical fitness and exercise

3,456

Number of volunteers

185,997

Number of volunteer Hours

Senior Center Volunteer Impact

Program Overview

Across Tennessee, 206 senior centers serve adults age 60 and older in all 95 counties, acting as vital community hubs. Through programs focused on health, social connection, nutrition, education, and recreation, they provide holistic support that enhances quality of life. Dedicated staff and volunteers create welcoming, inclusive spaces while continually adapting to meet evolving community needs.

Program Successes

Through our partnership with First Lady Maria Lee's office, three senior centers launched the Kids Serve Summer Challenge, uniting older adults and youth in meaningful service from writing letters of hope to distributing food boxes. This collaboration also delivered lasting impact through Samaritan's Feet, providing more than 500 senior center members with new, non-slip shoes that enhanced safety, mobility, and overall quality of life.

How to Volunteer

Take the first step today to make a meaningful impact in the lives of older adults in your community by connecting with your local senior center and exploring volunteer opportunities at <https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging.html>.



Program Statistics

13,703

Number of residents assisted

1,157

Number of facility visits

616

Number of families assisted

43

Number of volunteers

1,953

Number of volunteer hours

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Volunteer Impact

Program Overview

The Tennessee Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program ensures residents in 678 facilities are seen, heard, and treated with dignity, with Volunteer Ombudsman Representatives providing a trusted presence, building relationships, and working alongside staff to address concerns and ensure every voice is taken seriously.

Achievements

We see the impact of this work every day. A consistent presence in facilities transforms residents' experiences, giving those who feel isolated the courage to speak up, and for many, a Volunteer Ombudsman Representative becomes a trusted ally. Someone to share concerns, ask questions, and celebrate small victories, supported by an unwavering commitment to advocacy and to bringing comfort, clarity, and dignity to those who need it most.

How to volunteer

Initial VOR certification training includes 36 hours of classroom learning, self-study, and field experience. All applicants must complete an interview, background check, and screening for conflicts of interest. Learn more on our website at: <https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging>.

To learn more or begin the volunteer application process, please contact dda.aging@tn.gov.



Program Statistics

2,201

Number of older adults served

37,503

Number of trips provided

609,812

Number of miles driven

17

Number of programs reporting

666

Number of volunteers

30,492

Number of volunteer hours

Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) Volunteer Impact

Program Overview

The Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) is a statewide network of volunteer drivers that provide safe, reliable, and affordable door-to-door transportation for older adults. These programs help members get to essential appointments with ease, offering services for a minimal fee that varies by region.

Achievements

Despite funding cuts, staff and volunteers continue to deliver this essential service, helping more older adults than ever maintain independence and dignity. Trusted volunteer drivers provide more than transportation, they offer connection, support, and a vital lifeline that keeps people over 60 engaged in their communities.

How to Volunteer

Volunteers are literally the driving force behind SVTN. Volunteers are screened, background checked and trained prior to taking their first trip. A volunteer driver must meet the following requirements:

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

For more information please visit:

<https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging.html>.



Program Statistics

192

Number of older adults served

945

Number of visits conducted by volunteers

62

Number of volunteers

1,454

Number of volunteer hours

Tennessee Public Guardianship for the Elderly Volunteer Impact

Program Overview

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 guardians 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.

Achievements

- We have increased our number of visits by 168 from the previous year.
- The majority of volunteers feel their volunteer service is making a positive impact on the people they serve.
- 100% of volunteers feel valued as a member of the volunteer team.
- 100% of volunteers intend to continue volunteer service throughout 2026.

How to Volunteer

A volunteer with the Public Guardian 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:

<https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging.html>.



SPECIAL PROJECTS



Program Statistics

1,639

Number of older adults served

20,156

Number of letters sent

127,440

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

1,616

Number of volunteers

7,019

Number of volunteer hours

GNRC Letter Writing Campaign Impact

Program Overview

Launched in April 2020, the GNRC Letter Writing Campaign was created to strengthen social connections for older adults in Middle Tennessee. Since its inception, 127,440 letters have been sent to residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, brightening days and bringing smiles through simple acts of kindness. The heartfelt messages have made a meaningful impact, showing that even small gestures can create lasting joy and connection.

Achievements

The campaign has grown by engaging individuals, groups, and corporate teams, expanding its reach and impact. Residents and service coordinators at nursing homes consistently share their appreciation, while volunteers enjoy the simple yet meaningful opportunity to make a difference.

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, please contact Rebecca Nofi at rnofi@gnrc.org or **615-891-5876** or visit www.gnrc.org/volunteer.



Program Statistics

1,545

Number of older adults served

1,545

Number of Santa Bags donated

1,000

Number of volunteers

2,318

Number of volunteer hours

Santas for Seniors Impact

Program Overview

Santas for Seniors, established in 2016, supports homebound older adults during the holidays by providing essential items, personal gifts, and meaningful human connection. Through the generosity of donors and volunteers, the program delivers more than care packages. It helps seniors feel remembered, valued, and connected, reflecting a growing community commitment to supporting older adults.

Achievements

Over the years, Santas for Seniors has become a cherished holiday tradition for older adults, their families, and volunteers, bringing more than gifts—it delivers reassurance, companionship, and a powerful reminder that seniors are not forgotten. Families express deep appreciation for the comfort these visits provide, while volunteers find fulfillment in meaningful connections, and the program continues to strengthen community involvement and create a lasting, positive impact.

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.setaad.org.



Program Statistics

4,194

Number of older adults served

2,195

Number of classes conducted

41,943

Hour of exercises

38

Locations hosting classes

40

Number of volunteers

4,390

Number of volunteer hours

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) Volunteer Impact

Program Overview

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 class participants.

Achievements

Despite the end of funding, the SAIL program continues to grow thanks to sustainability measures and new leadership. With the University of Tennessee Medical Center as the statewide coordinating agency and Vanderbilt Medical Center supporting data collection and analysis, SAIL builds on the strong foundation laid by the Knox County Health Department and the East Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability to advance its mission of preventing falls among older adults for years to come.

How to volunteer

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

- be CPR certified.
- have a current fitness certification or equivalent degree.
- agree to teach class 2-3 days a week which 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**.



