



PROGRAMS IN COOK COUNTY 2022

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Adult Basic Education (ABE) – Theresa Luther-Dolan at (218) 264-9593
CareerForce – Anna Palo at (218) 735-6849
Diversionsary Work Program (DWP) – Theresa Luther-Dolan at (218) 264-9593
Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM) - Tracy Chase at (218) 259-4524
Minnesota Dislocated Worker Program (DW) – Jan Francisco (218) 748-7332
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) - Theresa Luther-Dolan at (218) 264-9593
Minnesota Family Resiliency Program (MFRP) - Theresa Luther-Dolan at (218) 264-9593
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - Theresa Luther-Dolan at (218) 264-9593
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Outreach) - Theresa Luther-Dolan at (218) 264-9593

HEAD START

Early Head Start - Jerry Crittenden at (218) 748-7351
Head Start - Jerry Crittenden at (218) 748-7351

HOUSING

Business Energy Retrofit Program (BER) - Office at (218) 735-6828
Downtown Building Rehab (DBR) - Office at (218) 735-6828
Energy Assistance Program (EAP) - (218) 735-6839 or (844) 568-0149
Homebuyer Assistance/First-time Homebuyer - Autumn Holweger at (218) 735-6895 or Sandy O’Fallon at (218) 999-0828
Homeless Services – Call 211 for an intake
Single Family Rehabilitation - Kim Perrella at (218) 735-6879
Weatherization Assistance Program - Liz Iammatteo at (218) 735-6822

SENIOR AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Bone Builder Classes - Kirsten Ryden at (218) 409-5991 or kirsten.ryden@aeoa.org
Food Shelves – Heather Mahoney at (218) 404-8466 or foodaccess@aeoa.org
Nutrition: Senior Dining & Meals on Wheels - Senior and Nutrition Services at (218) 735-6899
Senior Carnival/Expo (Cancelled in 2022) - Senior and Nutrition Services at (218) 735-6899
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Outreach) - - Tracy Chase at (218) 259-4524 or email tracy.chase@aeoa.org or Marilyn Ocepek at (218) 748-7325 or email marilyn.ocepek@aeoa.org
Volunteer Opportunities: AmeriCorps Seniors Arrowhead RSVP and Northland Volunteer Center - Kirsten Ryden at (218) 409-5991 or kirsten.ryden@aeoa.org

TRANSIT

Dial-a-Ride - (800) 862-0175
Scheduled Services - Visit www.arrowheadtransit.com or call (800) 862-0175
Volunteer Driver Program - Scott Olson at (218) 735-6886 or Kristin Deutsch at (218) 735-6873

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

AEOA's Adult Education program provides a full spectrum of learning options for community members who are age 17 years or older and are not enrolled in or required to be enrolled in any school in the K-12 system. In addition, the individual must lack a secondary high school credential and/or function below the 12th grade level in any of the basic academic areas including reading, math, and the ability to read, write and understand English. ABE services include basic skill and computer training, GED preparation, English language learning (ELL), college and career preparation, and industry-specific training (i.e., entrepreneur training, carpentry pre-apprenticeship, ServSafe food manager certification, para-professional certification) Services are available in-person and online.

CareerForce

As a partner with CareerForce, AEOA provides under-employed and unemployed individuals with information on coping with unemployment, seeking and applying for employment, maintaining employment, as well as providing information on training opportunities and other forms of employment and training assistance. Job Clubs offer an opportunity for job seekers to network with other job seekers and to share experiences in their search for employment.

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)

The Diversionsary Work Program (DWP) is a four-month program that helps low-income Minnesota families find a job. The program is aimed at helping participants obtain employment quickly and preventing them from needing additional public assistance services. Most families are enrolled in this program when they first apply for County assistance and can only be referred to AEOA by a County Financial Worker.

Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM)

The Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM) Program is a matched savings project to help low-wage earners build assets through purchase of a home, pursuit of higher education, or launching a small business. Eligible participants can place up to \$40 a month from their earned income into Family Asset Accounts which will be matched 3:1. Income limits apply, and participants are provided financial literacy and asset-specific education in either homeownership, college preparation, or business development.

Minnesota Dislocated Worker program (DW)

The Minnesota Dislocated Worker (DW) Program helps workers who lost their job through no fault of their own find a new career. An individual typically must qualify for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits to be eligible. DW staff work with the unemployed worker to re-enter the workforce in a stable job within a high-demand occupation providing career counseling and planning. Resources available through the DW program can include financial assistance for approved training, housing assistance, transportation assistance, relocation assistance, childcare, and other career-related needs. There may also be an opportunity for paid on-the-job training.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is the state's public assistance program for low-income families with children. The program focuses on the overall family's well-being and provides resources to move to employment quickly, whether this be through up-skilling or through help with interviews and job search skills. Referral to this program can only be provided to AEOA by a County Financial Worker.

Minnesota Family Resiliency Program (MFRP)

The Minnesota Family Resiliency Program (MFRP) is a program provided to individuals who have lost their primary source of income for reasons such as loss of a relationship through separation, divorce, death, or disability. If you lose public assistance benefits you may also qualify for the program. You must have provided unpaid household services for at least two years, have lost your primary source of income, and now find that you must support yourself or your family. Employment Counselors help individuals seek employment, assist in budgeting, teach stress management skills, and provide guidance and support, among other things. There are limited financial resources to assist clients with training costs, transportation, childcare, and housing assistance. Eligible MFRP participants may also be eligible to receive services from the Dislocated Worker program which could include additional assistance with training, transportation, childcare, and housing assistance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, is a program provided to adults with or without children who are seeking employment. AEOA Employment Counselors help SNAP clients in gaining the appropriate skills and abilities to obtain employment to gain self-sufficiency.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Outreach)

The Adult Education program provides screening to community members to help them determine if they are eligible for SNAP services. That goal is to help people make an informed decision about what hunger resources are available to them to ensure an overall successful transition from poverty to self-sufficiency.

HEAD START

Early Head Start

Early Head Start provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families and pregnant women and their families. The principles are designed to nurture healthy attachments between the parent and child; emphasize a strengths-based, relationship-centered approach to services; and encompass the full range of a family's needs from pregnancy through a child's third birthday. Applications are always welcome.

Head Start

Head Start provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families from birth until the child's fifth birthday. The program's services and resources are designed to foster stable family relationships, enhance children's physical and emotional well-being, and establish an environment to develop strong cognitive skills

HOUSING SERVICES

Business Energy Retrofit Program (BER)

The Business Energy Retrofit (BER) Program is designed to educate and help assist businesses within the Taconite Assistance Area with energy-efficient decisions and aid in financing the energy retrofit project. The BER program will support and provide the business up to \$20,000 in eligible retrofit expenses or one-third of the total project up to \$60,000. Applicants are required to obtain bids from local contractors and submit with AEOA's application.

Downtown Building Rehab (DBR)

The Downtown Building Rehabilitation (DBR) Program is designed to help aid in financing code compliant construction and remodeling projects on main streets in downtowns. The DBR Program will support and provide 1/3 project cost up to \$50,000 in eligible expenses. Up to 10% of awarded grant funding may be utilized for professional services such as an architect or engineer. Applicants are required to obtain prevailing wage compliant bids from local contractors and submit with AEOA's application.

Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

AEOA's Energy Assistance Program helps low-income residents heat their home throughout the winter by providing help and information needed to manage their fuel costs. The program provides financial grants to be used toward energy costs for residential heating bills with additional funds available for crisis situations and energy related repairs. Households must provide verification of their incomes for the eligibility period to qualify for this program.

Homebuyer Assistance/First-time Homebuyer

The Homeownership Assistance Program is designed to promote and encourage homeownership by providing training and counseling to first-time homebuyers. We conduct a series of Homestretch Workshops, open to anyone interested in learning how to buy a home. The classes are open to anyone currently in or interested or previous homeowners. Down payment and closing cost assistance may be available to income-eligible, qualified first-time homebuyers who complete the workshop.

Homeless Services

AEOA's homeless services are designed to keep community members housed, either through prevention resources or rapid rehousing. This includes assistance in finding housing and other support services, as well as direct assistance with rent, security deposits, mortgage, and other assistance targeted for families, single adults, and youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Single Family Rehabilitation

AEOA administers a variety of programs for eligible homeowners to make basic improvements to the safety, livability, energy efficiency, and accessibility of their home. Examples of improvements include electrical wiring, furnace or boiler replacement, window, and door replacements, siding and roofing, plumbing and septic system upgrades, mold and radon mitigation, and lead-based paint hazards. You may be eligible if you: own and occupy your home, are current with property tax and mortgage payments, have homeowner's insurance, and meet program income limits.

Weatherization Assistance Program

Weatherization Assistance services are available to income-eligible homeowners. AEOA's highly qualified Energy Auditors provide client education and perform energy audits to evaluate energy usage. AEOA's experienced and Skilled Work Crews will then complete improvements to reduce heating costs. Examples of improvements include exterior wall and attic insulation, air sealing, and home heating systems repair. Services are free for low-income households who qualify.

SENIOR AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Bone Builder Classes

Bone Builders is an RSVP Signature Program, developed by the research from Tufts University. Participants use a combination of weight-bearing exercises, balance, and strength training guided by a trained instructor. The idea behind the program is to increase muscle and bone density in seniors, prevent and reverse osteoporosis, and improve balance thereby reducing the risk of injury from falls. A side benefit is that participants experience increased energy and well-being through the socialization the group provides.

Food Shelves

AEOA provides 501(c)3 status to Food Shelves across Cook County to provide emergency and short-term assistance to income-eligible individuals and families who have run out of options to alleviate hunger.

Nutrition: Senior Dining & Meals on Wheels

AEOA's Nutrition services provide a full spectrum of services for seniors to live healthy and independently. In addition to nutritious meals, the service includes nutrition screening, assessment, and education. A Registered Dietitian completes a nutritional analysis and approves the cycle menus. Meals comply with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans and provide a minimum of one-third of the dietary reference intakes established by the Food and Nutrition Board. The program specifically targets older adults 60 years of age or older with the greatest economic or social need, with attention to disabled, low-income, and minority individuals, as well as older adults in rural communities, older adults with limited English proficiency, and older adults at risk of institutional care.

- a. **Meals on Wheels**—Also known as Home Delivered Meals, this is a service for dining patrons 60 years of age or older who have been assessed and are deemed “homebound.” Once prepared, the meals are packed for home delivery by volunteers. Service is available at a discounted rate. For many home-delivered meals recipients, the volunteer delivering the meal may be the recipient's only human contact of the day.
- b. **Senior Dining**—Dining services are offered at numerous locations such as senior housing, community or senior centers, and some restaurants for individuals 60 years of age or older. Dining patrons enjoy the company of peers, great conversation, and meals that provide over 40% of the daily intake of most key ingredients. Dining is open to all individuals 60 years of age or older with the opportunity for a reduced rate. Call (218) 735-6899 for dining locations.

Senior Carnival/Expo

Annually, AEOA hosts an All-County Senior Carnival/Expo. This event is held in June. The event attracts hundreds of seniors of all ages from the seven-county region. The day is filled with fun and games, exhibitors, demonstrations, and entertainment. The event is decorated in a festive carnival theme so that attendees feel like they are attending an old-fashioned carnival. Canceled for 2022.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Outreach)

AEOA's Senior Services staff and the Adult Basic Education program provide screening to community members to help them determine if they are eligible for SNAP services. The goal is to help people make an informed decision about what hunger resources are available to them to ensure an overall successful transition from poverty to self-sufficiency.

Volunteer Opportunities: AmeriCorps Seniors Arrowhead RSVP and Northland Volunteer Center

AmeriCorps Seniors Arrowhead RSVP engages persons 55 and better in volunteer services to meet critical community needs and to provide a high-quality experience to enrich their lives. Northland Volunteer Center promotes volunteering by assisting people of all ages—including families—to find meaningful volunteer opportunities in their communities. Volunteer opportunities involve helping children read, delivering Meals on Wheels, preserving the natural environment, providing tourist information, friendly visiting, and more.

TRANSIT

Dial-a-Ride

Arrowhead Transit's Dial-a-Ride is an on-demand system that provides transportation to individuals in our service areas. Passengers only need to call our dispatch at 800-862-0175 and select the number for their county or city. All transit buses are ADA accessible, and drivers are trained to assist passengers on and off the buses.

Scheduled Services

Arrowhead Transit has scheduled stops and provides a Dial-A-Ride Service in many areas.

Volunteer Driver Program

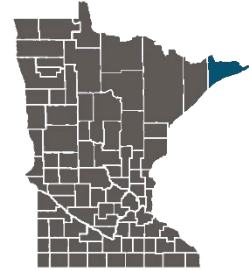
The Volunteer Driver Program assists individuals on Medical Assistance to get to and from medical appointments. Arrowhead Transit has contracts with four major insurance companies and with various counties in the area. The Volunteer Program encourages the individual to contact their insurance provider to see if they qualify for the program. The Volunteer Driver Program operates in ten counties including Aitkin, Carlton, Chisago, Cook, Isanti, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, and St. Louis, and can perform medical rides in other counties in Greater Minnesota as requested by the insurance companies.



Cook County Services

Mission:

AEOA's mission is to strengthen communities by providing opportunities for people experiencing social and economic challenges. AEOA provides services to community members through five major departments including Employment and Training, Head Start, Housing, Senior and Nutrition Services, and Arrowhead Transit. Not all departments operate programs in every county within AEOA's service area.



Key staff and board members:

Executive Director: Scott Zahorik

Department Directors: Jan Francisco (Employment & Training); Emily Celley (Fiscal Services); Skip Ferris (Head Start); Cathy Pazzelli (Human Resources and Assistant Executive Director); Dave Johnson (Housing Services); Ryan O'Connell (Information Systems); Emily Bombich (Planning); Marilyn Ocepek (Senior and Nutrition Services); Jack Larson (Arrowhead Transit).

AEOA Board: The Agency is governed by a 27-member tripartite board, representing low-income individuals, public officials, and private sector parties. Currently, there are two (2) representatives of Cook County on the Board.

Board Officers: Jeff Kletscher (Chair), Kevin Adey (Vice-Chair); Laura Perry (Second Vice-Chair); Dana Waldron (Secretary); Tom Cvar (Treasurer)

Number of staff members: Four (4) employees work in Cook County

Contact information: 15 North Broadway Avenue, Grand Marais, MN 55604; 300 W 3rd St. Grand Marais, MN 55604 (218) 387-4547 www.aeo.org

In Cook County, AEOA served...

- Adult Basic Education provided service to 4 Cook County residents. This could include basic skills improvement, GED preparation, college and career readiness, employment skills, digital literacy, life skills, and English language learning.
- Last year, approximately 14 people who were low-income, on public assistance, or were dislocated workers were assisted with employment-related needs.
- Housing Services assisted 7 individuals who were homeless in the past year.
- AEOA's Energy Assistance Program provided support to 187 households with primary heat funds, 67 households with emergency funds, and 2 households with energy-related repairs.
- The Business Energy Retrofit program assisted 2 community business owners in achieving energy-related improvements.
- Arrowhead RSVP had 71 volunteers who donated over 2,495 hours, serving 7 Cook County non-profits, running the gamut from helping seniors to remain living at home to providing food support.
- RSVP Bone Builders in Cook County had 2 sites with 8 volunteers who served 226 hours leading Bone Builders classes for 36 participants.
- Senior Nutrition provided 9,002 nutritious meals to seniors, roughly averaging 36 meals per day. Of those meals, 4,151 were delivered to older people who are homebound.
- The Food Shelf served 734 individuals, providing over 22,135 pounds of food to 83 visitors in the calendar year 2021.
- Arrowhead Transit provided 13,301 rides to Cook County passengers, totaling 78,363 miles.
- The Volunteer Driver Program had 0 volunteers and provided 14 rides.

AEOA is committed to continuing our strong partnership with Cook County. We are proud of the work we do to help struggling households meet their basic needs met; homebound seniors live in their own homes; and to

help people find work and have the transportation to get there. We currently have four (4) people working in Cook County who contribute to the local economy and are very dedicated to the services they provide.