



PROGRAMS IN ITASCA COUNTY 2022

AEOA does not operate Head Start programming in Itasca County.

EMPLOYMENT and TRAINING

Adult Basic Education (ABE) - Emily Sundeen at (218) 259-0285

Adult Scholarship Program – Ellie Swanson at (218) 327-6746

CareerForce - Jeremiah Olson at (218) 327-6758

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP) - Jeremiah Olson at (218) 327-6758

Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM) - Tracy Chase at (218) 259-4524

Free at Last - Jennifer Mulligan at (218) 322-6505 or Heidi Varin at (218) 322-6506

LIFE for Homeless Youth – Heidi Varin at (218) 322-6506

Minnesota Dislocated Worker Program (DW) - Jeremiah Olson at (218) 327-6758

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) - Jeremiah Olson at (218) 327-6758

Minnesota Family Resiliency Program (MFRP) - Jeremiah Olson at (218) 327-6758

Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP) - Jeremiah Olson at (218) 327-6758 or Anna Palo (218) 735-6849

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - Jeremiah Olson at (218) 327-6758

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Outreach) - Emily Sundeen at (218) 259-0285

YouthBuild - Randy Seaman at (218) 750-1893

HOUSING SERVICES

Business Energy Retrofit Program (BER) - Office at (218) 735-6828

Downtown Building Rehab (DBR) - Office at (218) 735-6828

SENIOR SERVICES

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

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.

Adult Scholarship Program

The Adult Scholarship Program is a scholarship offered through the support of the Blandin Foundation for adults 25 years of age and older who are Itasca County residents and are at, or below, 275% of the federal poverty guidelines. This scholarship assists adults with financial support to pursue post-secondary degrees that are in career areas that have labor market potential in the Itasca County area.

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.

Free at Last

The Free at Last program is for at-risk youth who have been in County approved out of home placement. Free at Last is for youth aged 16 up to age 24. This program focuses on teaching independent living skills through experiential education, teamwork, and individual counseling. Participants attend weekly group meetings, take part in community service projects, and attend outdoor challenge activities. Youth that are homeless are also assisted.

LIFE for Homeless Youth

The LIFE program is a transitional housing program for homeless youth between the age of 18 and 24.

Eligible youth are offered a menu of services to build a plan that will help stabilize their housing situations. Some of these services may include rental assistance, security deposits, utility assistance, moving expenses, and case management.

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.

Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP)

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is designed to promote part-time, temporary employment through which program participants are engaged in community service and receive work experience and job skills that can lead to unsubsidized employment. It is AEOA's goal to enhance employment opportunities for older individuals and to promote older workers as a solution for businesses seeking a trained, qualified, and reliable workforce. This program serves individuals age 55 and over and has income eligibility guidelines.

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.

YouthBuild

The YouthBuild program is for individuals between the age of 16 and 24 who have dropped out of school or are in an alternative school setting and are interested in developing skills in the construction field. Participants receive hands-on training in construction and carpentry skills while working toward their GED or high school diploma. Construction projects focus on low-income housing and non-profit organizations.

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.

SENIOR AND NUTRITION SERVICES

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. **Bundled Service Program**—For dining patrons 60 years of age or older who live in remote areas, AEOA's Bundled Services program makes twice-a-month deliveries to seniors that offers prepared meals that are frozen, food shelf commodities, and Nutritional Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS) food box. Bundled Services also serves as a safety net for participants as telephone contacts, and check-ins offer opportunities to convey their day-to-day concerns.
- b. **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.

- c. **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 provides 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.

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. For information on Arrowhead Transit Services in your area, visit www.arrowheadtransit.com or dial 800-862-0175.

Volunteer Driver Program

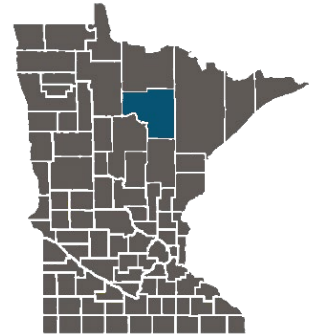
The Volunteer Driver Program assists individuals on Medical Assistance to get to and from medical appointments. Arrowhead Transit has contracts with four major insurance companies and with various counties in the area. The Volunteer Program encourages the individual to contact their insurance provider 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.



Itasca 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 is one representative of Itasca County on the Board.

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

Number of staff members: Thirty-three (33) employees work in Itasca County

Contact information: Grand Rapids CareerForce, 1215 SE 2nd Ave, Grand Rapids, MN 55744 (218) 327-6760
Grand Rapids Service Center, 421 SE 13th Street, Grand Rapids, MN 55744 (218) 327-1138; www.aeo.org

In Itasca County, AEOA served...

- Adult Basic Education provided service to 81 Itasca 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 246 people who were low-income, on public assistance, or were dislocated workers were assisted with employment-related needs.
- Senior Employment Programs provided 5 individuals with an opportunity to build a pathway into employment for our low-income, older citizens, ages 55 and older. Entering the workforce, they learn and apply new skills while earning a paycheck.
- Youth Programs provided 60 youth with a connection to a variety of services which include: teaching at-risk youth independent living skills through experiential education, teamwork, and individual counseling; providing training in construction and carpentry skills while working toward their GED or high school diploma; and services to build a plan to help stabilize their housing situations through rental assistance, security deposits, utility assistance, moving costs and case management.
- The Adult Scholarship Program provided service to 65 Itasca County residents. The includes educational counseling as well as financial support for tuition, books, daycare, mileage, and living expenses.

- The Business Energy Retrofit program assisted 11 community business owners in achieving energy-related improvements.
- The Downtown Building Rehabilitation program assisted 1 community business owner in achieving code and accessibility-related improvements.
- Senior Nutrition provided 50,122 nutritious meals to seniors, roughly averaging 199 meals per day. Of those meals, 32,504 were delivered to older people who are homebound.
- Arrowhead Transit provided 90,989 rides to Itasca County passengers totaling 388,068 miles.
- The Volunteer Driver Program had 7 volunteers and provided 2,405 rides.

AEOA is committed to continuing our strong partnerships within Itasca 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 thirty-three (33) people working in Itasca County who contribute to the local economy and are very dedicated to the services they provide.