Program Information - Aitkin County
October 2019

AEOA does not operate Head Start programming in Aitkin County.

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 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 on-line. Contact Kristy Dobson at 800-662-5711 ext. 6836 for information on enrollment.

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. For additional information, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

Diversionary Work Program (DWP)—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. For additional information, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

Legacy—This program is intended to improve and expand the capacity of the state’s workforce system to help low income, underemployed or unemployed older workers who are 55 or older, enter employment through increased targeted, intensive services and employer engagement. Career Navigators customize solutions based on the needs of individuals, connecting them directly to employers. For additional information, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

Lives in Transition (LIT)—LIT is a program provided to individuals who have transitioned from a relationship through separation, divorce, death, or disability. 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, child care, and housing assistance. For additional information, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

Minnesota Dislocated Worker program (DW)—DW 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. For eligibility to this program, you must be 18 years of age or
older, worked six of the last 36 months, and have written documentation of your employment separation. For additional information, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

**Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)**—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 interview and job search skills. Referral to this program can only be provided to AEOA by a County Financial Worker. For additional information, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

**Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP)**—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. To receive more information on SCSEP, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**—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. For additional information, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

**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. For additional information, contact Kristy Dobson at 800-662-5711 ext. 6836.

**HOUSING**

**Business Energy Retrofit Program (BER)**—The Business Energy Retrofit 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. Businesses interested in participating in the BER program should contact Vince Meyer at (218) 735-6828.

**SENIOR 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. To complete a registration form and verify eligibility, contact the Senior Services Department at (218) 735-6899.
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.

**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. For more information or to apply, contact Kristy Dobson at 800-662-5711 ext. 2126.

**TRANSIT**

Dial-a-Ride—Arrowhead Transit’s Dial-a-Ride service is the public system set up to meet a variety of transportation needs. Drivers pick up riders at their front door and drop them off at their destination. Drivers assist passengers on and off the bus and assist individuals using the lift who are bound to a wheelchair. To participate in Arrowhead Transit’s Dial-a-Ride service, dial 800-862-0175 for Aitkin County.

**Rural Rides Program** — Rural Rides is a transportation program, assisting individuals in Aitkin County to get to and from work, job-search activities, or job-specific training. Each person is provided an individualized transportation plan that utilizes public transportation, volunteer drivers, and ride share resources to meet their temporary transportation needs. To learn more on Rural Rides in Aitkin County, contact Luke Christensen at (218) 360-9896.

**Scheduled Services**—Arrowhead Transit has scheduled stops and provides a Dial-A-Ride Service. For scheduled stops 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 also has contracts 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 eight counties including Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, and St. Louis. To learn more about the Volunteer Driver Program, please contact Colette Hanson at (218) 735-6814 or Martin Lepak at (218) 410-9755.