Program Information - Koochiching County
October 2019

AEOA does not operate Head Start or Housing programming in Koochiching 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.

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 Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

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 Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM)—The 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. For eligibility requirements, contact Jan Francisco at (218) 327-6748.

Free at Last & Freestyle – The Free at Last and Freestyle programs are for at-risk youth who have been in County approved out of home placement. Freestyle is for youth that are 14 and 15 years of age, while Free at Last is for youth age 16 up to age 21. These programs focus 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. For additional information, contact Jennifer Mulligan at (218) 322-6505.

Host Home Program – This is a school-based host home program for students, high school youth, ages 14-21, identified as homeless or highly mobile, find a safe and secure place to live. Youth may be experiencing homelessness, or at-risk of experiencing homelessness in rural and/or tribal areas of Minnesota. AEOA will partner with public or charter schools, school districts and/or education consortia
operating in rural Minnesota. For additional information, contact DeAnna Winge at (218) 322-6503 or Heidi Varin at (218) 322-6506.

**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 Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

**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, childcare, and housing assistance. For additional information, contact Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

**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. For additional information, contact Valerie Forsythe at (218) 283-6271.

**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 Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

**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 Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

**Pathways to Prosperity** - These programs and services are designed to provide workforce development and training opportunities to economically disadvantaged adults that will help them develop increased career awareness; acquire basic skills education; participate in skills-training programs; placing them into employment in high-growth, high-demand industries with long-term employment opportunities. For additional information, contact Tracy Chase at (218) 259-4524.

**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 Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

**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 Ginger Romosz at (218) 285-7529.

**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.

**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. **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 Partners Care (SPC)**—SPC is a program which serves the same purpose as a Medicare supplement insurance policy to take care of medical costs that are not paid by Medicare. Unlike an insurance policy, SPC does not pay out any money. SPC provides access to a service that writes off 20% of Medicare patient responsibility bills which are not reimbursed by Medicare if a member uses a member provider and has a Medicare approved treatment. SPC is for people whose income is too large to be on Medicaid (Medical Assistance) but too low to afford a supplemental insurance policy. For more information or to apply, contact AEOA Senior Partners Care at (218) 748-7337 or (218) 735-6899.

**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.
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 Koochiching County.

Rural Rides Program — Rural Rides is a transportation program, assisting individuals in Koochiching 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, taxis, volunteer drivers, and ride share resources to meet their temporary transportation needs. To learn more on Rural Rides in Koochiching County, contact Anna Palo (218) 735-6849 or Randy Hokkanen (218) 262-7359.

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.