

# Awards, Grants and Recognition

Updated March 11, 2025



## 2024

**NCOA Benefits (NCOA) Benefits Enrollment Center Grant** – Council on Aging received an NCOA Benefits Enrollment Center Grant to support the organization in becoming a Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC). The goal of the BEC program is to promote lasting transformations to the ways older adults and adults living with disabilities are assisted with enrolling in and retaining the benefits they are eligible for. BECs use person-centered strategies in a coordinated, community-wide approach to find and enroll Medicare beneficiaries who have limited income and resources to access available benefits.

**2024 Cincinnati Business Courier C-Suite Award** – Vice President of People Services Jacqueline Hutsell was named a 2024 *Cincinnati Business Courier* C-Suite Award Honoree. The C-Suite Awards recognize top-level executives whose leadership skills and business acumen have driven strong results for organizations across Greater Cincinnati.

**McCullough Hyde Foundation Grant** – The McCullough-Hyde Foundation awarded COA a \$10,000 grant to support its FastTrack Home program in Butler County. FastTrack Home provides in-home care services such as homemaking, home-delivered meals and medical transportation to older adults when they need them most – as they are leaving the hospital or nursing home. The foundation's Community Granting Program is a philanthropic program that makes investments that address significant health needs of local communities.

**Ohio Department of Aging Opioid Education Grant** – The Ohio Department of Aging awarded a \$33,000 grant to Council on Aging to provide education about opioid use and misuse in older adults. Using the grant dollars, COA planned and executed a professional development conference that provided free continuing education units for Ohio social workers and nurses. The conference featured local experts on opioid and addiction issues and attracted more than 140 attendees. Additionally, COA launched a public education campaign in its region using print and digital media to reach approximately 340,000 individuals. [Read More](#)

**Duke Energy Foundation Grant** – During its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the Duke Energy Foundation awarded a \$10,000 grant to COA. The grant dollars support a new partnership between COA and the New Life Furniture Bank intended to furnish the homes of approximately 25 COA clients in need.

**Ohio Kentucky Indiana Section 5310 Funding for home52 Transportation** – Council on Aging and its subsidiary home52 received federal funding to improve mobility for older adults and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding transportation options. The funding supports home52 Transportation, which manages multiple transportation providers through a centralized transportation coordination system, providing specialized, on-demand and advance-scheduled trips for older adults and people with disabilities.

**WeThrive HCPH Mini Grant II** – Council on Aging received a \$160,000 WeThrive Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH) Mini Grant II to expand access to COA’s evidence-based wellness education programs for older adults within the HCPH jurisdiction. The grant supports efforts to reduce social isolation, improve chronic disease management and enhance access to preventive health education. With this funding, COA offers transportation assistance to older adults participating in wellness workshops within WeThrive communities, ensuring they can access critical programs without mobility barriers. The grant also strengthens partnerships with local community host sites, increasing opportunities for older adults to engage in wellness education.

**USAgings Center of Excellence to Align Health and Social Care (COE) Grant** – Council on Aging and Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities received a COE grant. The COE, funded by the U.S. Administration for Community Living, aims to strengthen community care hubs by integrating health-related social needs assessments, improving care management systems and ensuring efficient data sharing between healthcare and social service networks.

**Inform USA 2024 Innovation Award** – COA is honored to partner with Hamilton County on its innovative 513Relief Bus. Along with other social services agency reps, a COA specialist is aboard the bus at many of its stops in the community, sharing information about programs and services for older adults and caregivers. In 2024, this cooperative relationship was recognized by [Inform USA](#) with a 2024 Innovation Award in the Collaboration category. The award recognizes the innovative opportunity the 513Relief Bus provides COA and other partners in bringing services and resources directly to the people of Hamilton County. [Read More](#)

**National Council on Aging (NCOA) Benefits Enrollment Center Grant** – Council on Aging received an NCOA Benefits Enrollment Center Grant to support the organization in becoming a Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC). The goal of the BEC program is to promote lasting transformations to the ways older adults and adults living with disabilities are assisted with enrolling in and retaining the benefits they are eligible for. BECs use person-centered strategies in a coordinated, community-wide approach to find and enroll Medicare beneficiaries who have limited income and resources to access available benefits.

**Clinton County Community Champion (C4) Award** – Council on Aging’s Provider Services team received the award to recognize their work and exceptional commitment to Clinton County older adults by building and managing the provider network that delivers critical services to homebound older adults. The C4 Awards are bestowed by the Clinton County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce to the businesses, community partners and citizens who work to make Clinton County a wonderful community to live, work and visit. [Read More](#)

**Discretionary Grants** – COA received three discretionary grants from Interact for Health, GRAIL Bioscience and PhRMA, which are supporting its efforts to preserve and enhance service offerings, implement health and wellness programs and increase community awareness of programs and services that promote dignity, choice and independence for older adults and caregivers in its region.

## 2023

**USAgings Vaccination Grant** – In 2023, Council on Aging received funding from the USAging-led Aging and Disability Vaccination Collaborative (ADVC) to conduct activities aimed at connecting older adults and people with disabilities to COVID-19 and flu vaccines. Led by USAging and funded by the U.S. Administration for Community Living, the ADVC grants help communities stay healthy by targeting older adults and people with disabilities, particularly those from historically marginalized and underserved communities in which vaccination rates are low. [Read More](#)

**Cigna Foundation Health and Wellbeing Grant** – Council on Aging received a Cigna Foundation Health and Wellbeing Grant to support older adults who are socially isolated by providing opportunities for social connectedness through both virtual and in-person activities. The grant provided home52 Transportation services to medical and non-medical appointments; connections to local senior centers; Animal Companion Counseling; access to virtual programming for older adults; and connections to Meals on Wheels programming.

**Federal Transit Administration 5310 Funding** – Council on Aging and its subsidiary home52 received federal funding to improve mobility for older adults and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding transportation options. The funding supports home52 Transportation, which manages multiple transportation providers through a centralized transportation coordination system, providing specialized, on-demand and advance-scheduled trips for older adults and people with disabilities. [Read More](#)

**Cincinnati PRSA Blacksmith Award** – Council on Aging and its partner, Vehr Communication, received a 2023 Public Relations Society of America Blacksmith Award in the Integrated Communications category for a marketing campaign to promote COA's innovative homecare matching app, AddnAide. The Blacksmith Awards honor the best of the Cincinnati region's public relations community, from talented, experienced practitioners to stellar work that has local, national and international impact.

**dmi:Design Value Award** – In October, Council Aging and its partner, the Live Well Collaborative, received a first place 2023 dmi:Design Value Award from the Design Management Institute (DMI). The award acknowledges organizations that have made significant contributions to the field of design and have demonstrated a commitment to improving people's lives through design excellence. COA and Live Well received the award for work on a project that sought to redesign the way meal programs are delivered to older adults through select Council on Aging programs. [Read More](#)

**USAgings 2023 Aging Innovations and Achievement Awards** – Council on Aging's COVID-19 Homebound Vaccination Program for Vulnerable Older Adults was selected as a recipient of a *2023 USAging Aging Achievement Award* in the Public Health & Vaccinations category. The award was presented at USAging's Annual Conference and Tradeshow in July. USAging annually identifies and showcases members' innovative and successful programs to encourage their replication by other agencies. The awards recognize programs that exemplify innovation and sound management practices. [Read More](#)

**Mom's Meals USAging Community Champion Award 2023** – In June, Council on Aging Case Manager Theresa Bracher, LSW, was selected as the [Mom's Meals USAging 2023 Community Champion](#). This national award honors long-term care case managers for their outstanding achievements in the areas of nutrition, health and healthy lifestyles. The award underscores the value of the case manager's role in

supporting whole health in their communities and promotes awareness of the importance of nutrition in overall health — particularly to reduce the impact of social determinants, to support individuals who want to age at home, and to support the management of chronic conditions. [Read More](#)

**Association for Professionals in Aging Project of the Year Award** – In March, Council on Aging’s Vice President of Program Operations Ken Wilson received the TriState chapter of the Association of Professionals in Aging’s (APA) Project of the Year Award for the Homebound Vaccination Program. [Read More](#)

**VUCA Award** – Council on Aging Senior Innovation Designer Jai’La Nored received the 2023 VUCA Leadership Award from the Leadership Council for Nonprofits in March. The award recognizes an early-career leader in the Greater Cincinnati nonprofit sector who is positively impacting their organization and the community through demonstrated vision, understanding, clarity and agility in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world. [Read More](#)

**HUDs Older Adults Home Modification Program** – In April, Council on Aging was awarded a \$1.25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Older Adults Home Modification Program. The program aims to enable low-income older adults to remain in their homes through low-cost, low barrier, high impact home modifications to reduce their risk of falling, improve general safety, increase accessibility, and improve their functional abilities in their home. Council on Aging will use the funding to assist low-income older homeowners in Clinton County. [Read More](#)

**2023 AARP Community Challenge Grant** – In June, home52 Transportation, a service of Council on Aging (COA) subsidiary home52, received a 2023 AARP Community Challenge Grant. home52 Transportation was one of only 310 grantees nationwide (out of 3,600+ applications). The \$35,168 grant was in the Transportation Systems Change Demonstration category, which is supported by Toyota Motor North America. The AARP grant provided funding for the development of educational tools to help older riders access and use an online scheduling platform, including step-by-step videos and printed guides, as well as in-person education sessions for those who require additional assistance. [Read More](#)

## 2022

**Community Care Hub National Learning Community** – Council on Aging was one of 58 organizations selected by the U.S. Administration on Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to participate in this collaborative focused on addressing health-related social needs and public health needs through contracts with health care entities. [Read More](#)

**North Star Leadership Award** – Council on Aging CEO, Suzanne Burke received the North Star Leadership Award from 55 North (formerly known as the Hyde Park Center for Older Adults) in recognition for her leadership during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**2022 Outstanding Area Agencies on Aging Partnership of the Year Award** – Council on Aging and the University of Cincinnati’s (UC) Live Well Collaborative received this award in October for partnering to develop innovative programs that use available, modern technology to improve the lives of area older adults and caregivers. The award highlights a partnership with significant contributions, exemplary cooperation, and innovative approaches for improving services to older adults. [Read More](#)

**Interact for Health Advised Grant** – In August, Council on Aging received a \$6,500 Interact for Health Advised Grant. The funds will play a critical role in meeting the transportation needs of low-income older adults who do not qualify for other existing transportation programs.

**Forty Under 40** – In July, Council on Aging's Senior Innovation Designer, Jai'La Nored, was named to the Cincinnati Business Courier's Forty Under 40 Class of 2022. The annual awards program recognizes young leaders and professionals from across Greater Cincinnati. [Read More](#)

**2022 Medical Mutual Aging and Disability Innovation Award** – In June, Council on Aging's Care Census was recognized for its research on the scope and impact of caregiving responsibilities on the broader workforce and for its work to build partnerships with the local business community to better support working caregivers. [Read More](#)

**2021 OAGE Practitioner of the Year** – In April, Council on Aging's Vice President of Program Operations, Ken Wilson, was named Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education's (OAGE) 2021 Practitioner of the Year. The award recognizes individuals and organizations that either have improved services to older adults through research and evaluation or have developed noteworthy partnerships with institutions of higher learning for the betterment of Ohio's elders. [Read More](#)

## 2021

**The Health Collaborative's Inspire Healthcare Award** – In December, Council on Aging received an Inspire Healthcare award from The Health Collaborative for Discharge to Home, a program developed by COA during the pandemic to provide a safe, supportive path home for older adults being discharged from area hospitals and nursing facilities, while also freeing up valuable healthcare resources. Inspire Healthcare is the region's premier healthcare awards event, recognizing regional heroes who are pioneering efforts in improving health and healthcare. [Read More](#)

**Council on Aging named NASW Ohio Chapter Region 6 Agency of the Year** – In November, Council on Aging was named the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Ohio Chapter Region 6 2021 Agency of the Year. The award honors agencies that best exemplify social work values in the field, using best practices to make positive change in their communities. [Read More](#)

**C-Suite Awards** – In September, Suzanne Burke, Council on Aging's CEO, was honored by the *Cincinnati Business Courier* with a C-Suite Award in the Chief Executive Officer, Large Non-Profit category. The C-Suite Awards honor top-level executives who've shown outstanding leadership and stellar performance at Greater Cincinnati businesses and nonprofits. [Read More](#)

**Clinton County C4 award** – Council on Aging won a Clinton County Community Champion (C4) award for the second year in a row. The 2021 award recognizes Council on Aging's leadership in developing a plan to bring COVID-19 vaccinations to homebound older adults. [Read More](#)

**Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) Innovation Award** – In May, COA received national recognition from the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) for its Comfort Meal Program. The program, which addresses food insecurity and social isolation among older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, was awarded an AIRS Innovation Award in the category of Disaster Preparedness. [Read More](#)

**City of Cincinnati Human Service Fund supports home52 Transportation** – home52 Transportation received \$55,000 from the City of Cincinnati Human Service Fund to coordinate free non-emergency medical transportation for low income older adults. home52, a wholly owned subsidiary of Council on Aging, will partner with low-income senior housing units in the City of Cincinnati to coordinate transportation for residents with barriers to appropriate transportation to meet their medical needs.

## 2020

**Association of Professionals in Aging 2020 Hero Award** – In December, COA and several other area service providers, were recognized as Heroes for their response efforts related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**bi3 Grant** – In November, bi3, Bethesda Inc.'s grantmaking initiative, awarded \$50,000 to Council on Aging (COA) to help support the implementation of virtual case management and assessment visits. bi3 sought proposals addressing health or social needs that impact health outcomes, particularly for people experiencing health disparities. The \$50,000 grant award will help build COA's care management capacity, strengthen operations and better position the organization to meet future needs. [Read More](#)

**Humana Bold Goal Grant** – In November, COA received a \$25,000 grant from Humana as part of its Bold Goal population health strategy to improve the health of the communities it serves. The grant helped COA sustain its award-winning COVID-19 comfort meal program, which provided more than 47,000 restaurant meals to low-income older adults in COA's service area during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Read More](#)

**Clinton County Community Champions (C4) Awards** – In November, Council on Aging received a Clinton County Community Champions (C4) Award. The awards, created in 2020 by the Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce, along with the Clinton County Convention and Visitors Bureau, highlight stories of the Clinton County citizens, employers and employees, and organizations making an impact in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COA was recognized in the nonprofit category for its Comfort Meal Program. The program is a COA partnership with local restaurants that delivers meals to low-income older adults to help them combat monotony and isolation during the pandemic. In addition, COA nominee and Clinton County resident Donna Slone-Gumbert received a C4 award in the citizen category.

Donna was selected as a winner for her work as a key partner in serving older adults in Clinton County – delivering food and essential supplies to those in need. [Read More](#)

**Outstanding AAA Partnership of the Year Award** – In October, COA received the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a) 2020 Outstanding AAA Partnership of the Year award for its Comfort Meal Program. Through COA's partnerships with nine local restaurants, about 50,000 meals were delivered to the doorsteps of low-income older adults during 2020. The program also helped its partner restaurants continue to operate during a time of shut-downs and limits on dine-in service.

**Aetna Grant** – In April, COA received a \$40,000 grant from Aetna, a CVS Health business (Aetna), supporting its response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The grant was part of more than \$1 million CVS Health



and its foundations gave to address food insecurity and other community needs in response to the challenges presented by pandemic. [Read More](#)

**United Way of Greater Cincinnati/Greater Cincinnati Foundation COVID-19 Regional Response Fund –** In April, Council on Aging received \$500,000 to support pandemic response efforts aimed at ensuring the health and safety of older adults in COA's service area. Funding was used to provide meals and personal care items to older adults impacted by the pandemic. [Read More](#)

## 2020 & 2019 Care Census Project

During 2019 and 2020, COA conducted an innovative research project designed to help local businesses understand the impact of elder caregiving on their workforce. Named the "Care Census," COA collected data from employees in our region that demonstrates to businesses how changing demographics and gaps in our country's long-term care system impact their employees.

The Care Census work was recognized with the following awards:

**September 2020** – Council on Aging received an [Aging Innovations Award](#) from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a – now USAging), the highest honor presented by n4a to member agencies. [Read More](#)

**December 2019** – Council on Aging was honored to receive the **Outstanding Project in Aging** award from the Tristate chapter of the Association for Professionals in Aging. [Read More](#)

**October 2019** – COA was a finalist for the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber's Ignite Action Award in the category of Leading with a Bold Voice for Business. [Read More](#)

## 2019

**COA Awarded Federal Transportation Grant** – In May, received a \$470,000 grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The award was part of FTA's Access and Mobility Partnership Grants which awarded approximately \$9.6 million to 37 projects led by transit agencies, governmental authorities and nonprofit organizations to support innovative transportation solutions to expand access to health care. Council on Aging used the funding to design and implement a centralized, on-demand transportation service to coordinate non-emergency medical transportation for older adults in COA's service area. [Read More](#)

## 2017

**Inspire Healthcare Awards** – Council on Aging's innovative program for helping hospitalized older adults connect with essential in-home services received The Health Collaborative's Richard M. Smith MD Leadership in Quality Improvement Award. The award was presented to Council on Aging's FastTrack Home program at the organization's annual Inspire | Healthcare Awards Ceremony on November 1. The award recognizes an individual or team who exemplifies commitment to quality improvement, makes it an organizational priority, and serves as a role model for those working to enhance the quality of care within their organization and throughout the community. [Read More](#)

**Venue Magazine and Lead Magazine C-Suite Award** – Council on Aging’s Vice President of People Services, Jacqueline Hutsell, M.Ed., PHR, HCS, was selected as a C-Suite Award honoree for 2017. The award is presented by *Venue Magazine* and *Lead Magazine* to honor our region’s leading chief executive officers; chief operating, information, marketing, and financial officers; board level leaders; and other C-level executives. Individuals are selected based on their invaluable contributions to their organization and the region as well as their personal leadership characteristics. [Read More](#)

## 2016

**Inspire Healthcare Awards** – Council on Aging’s Care Transitions team was a finalist for the Health Collaborative’s Inspire Healthcare Award in the Leadership and Quality Improvement category. The awards recognize individuals, teams and organizations working to improve health and healthcare in the community.

**Aetna Better Health of Ohio** – Council on Aging received a \$25,000 grant from Aetna Better Health of Ohio, Inc. to help develop initiatives aimed at strengthening the connection between health and long-term care.

## 2015

**Comprehensive Healthcare Leadership Award** – Suzanne Burke, Chief Executive Officer, received the award honoring our region’s leading health care professionals who strive to improve the everyday lives of their patients and colleagues. The award is based on the individual’s invaluable contributions and personal leadership characteristics.

**Miami University Scripps Gerontology Center W. Fred Cottrell Distinguished Alumni Award** – Ken Wilson, Council on Aging’s Vice President of Program Operations, received the award for outstanding leadership in the field of aging.

**Leadership 500 Excellence Awards Program** – Council on Aging’s Team Educator Certification Program received third place honors in the Midsize Company Category out of 200 contestants as a best practice in human resources.

## 2013

**OSAGE Best Practitioner of the Year Award** – Awarded to Council on Aging’s Business Intelligence Team for their leading-edge work in data analysis.

**O4A Award** – Council on Aging staff were honored by the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (O4A) for work leading the statewide initiative to develop pricing models.

**Women Excel Award – Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber of Commerce** – Council on Aging’s Care Transitions Program was a runner up in the Best New Product of the Year category.



## 2011

**Service Appreciation Award** – O4A honored three Council on Aging senior leaders for their statewide efforts and support of the association.

## 2010

**Better Business Bureau Torch Award** – The prestigious Torch Award honors businesses and organizations that fully commit to ethical practices.