OUR MISSION
Promote the independence, dignity & well-being of adults through service, education & advocacy.

OUR VISION
A community where everyone has the opportunity to age successfully.

"I am very thankful that SHIIP Counseling not only exists but is staffed by such qualified, caring individuals. You can be assured that I will recommend Buncombe County's Council on Aging SHIIP Counseling to anyone who might benefit." - Medicare Client

"Simply put, Vance is a gem. Vance’s abilities include but are not limited to assisting residents with day to day and "special circumstances" matters with dignity and respect, coordinating medical resources such as the COVID vaccination administration, and informing all residents of the variety of community resources in a timely fashion." - Vanderbilt Resident

"We had been searching for grab bar installation in our shower and were unable to locate any business or individual. We contacted the COA and were informed they would provide the service. The installer was personable, pleasant and competent. I plan to look into programs for activities for the elderly. Thank you!" - Minor Home Repair Client, Donor

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"The past year was undeniably a year of ongoing challenges, but it was also a year of inspiration. Our team at Council on Aging continued to respond with agility, creativity and boldness."

Jackie Dula
CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD

"With more than 71,000 people in Buncombe over the age of 60 today, now is the time for us to rise up to build upon programs, harness the power of community, and increase capacity to put food on the table, create financial security, and deliver resources to more adults and their families than ever before."

Heather Bauer
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Thank you for choosing Council on Aging!

The Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc. is a charitable organization 501(c)(3) registered with the Secretary of State of the State of North Carolina.
Resource Coordination & Care Management
DONNA CASE, DIRECTOR OF RESOURCE COORDINATION

This year in Resource Coordination, we had an estimated cost savings of almost $325,000 in documented results, with another estimated value of over $131,000 through over 13,000 calls for Information & Assistance. These values are based on access to home repairs and tangible goods, as well access to services for increased benefits and reduced expenses. We began the year with a hard shift from regular client visits in the home and in our offices to increased telephone assistance and limited home visits, as well as staff working in a hybrid office/remote environment. Resource Coordination staff went into full force to increase food delivery services, sourcing paper goods and cleaning supplies, pet food, cell phones, PPE and more to deliver to our clients.

Staff began calling existing clients. In many cases, applications were completed over the phone (SNAP, housing, Medicaid, etc.), then mailed. We tripled our homebound food delivery client base to over 70, as well as doubled our frequency of visits and meals per trip. Staff joined volunteers in these efforts and the efforts to deliver healthy food boxes to an additional 72 people.

We worked with three partners agencies to provide services to those in need of in home care. We served 80 clients, more than 40% were age 75–84. We served clients in 15 zip codes and over 90% were high risk for IADLs/ADLs and had high nutritional risks.

Our Caregiver Specialist and CARES Liaison served family caregivers in Buncombe and Madison Counties with family caregiver respite and hosted virtual support groups. Our Elder Justice Navigator assisted those reporting elder abuse. We helped hundreds of residents receive COVID vaccinations. Two of our Service Coordinators continued to work in HUD housing to ensure residents were safe, well and engaged at Battery Park and Vanderbilt Apartments.

No amount of space could tell these stories...

Health Insurance Services
BRUCE BIRDSALL, DIRECTOR OF INSURANCE SERVICES

Insurance service programming looked quite different this year due to changes in outreach and counseling formats, moving largely to virtual and telephone-based services. In Medicare, we had over 3,000 contacts and the value of savings for our clients was over nearly $1,400,000. Through our Benefits Enrollment Center for low income Medicare beneficiaries, we assisted nearly 600 individuals and helped with nearly 350 applications with a total value of benefits of over $1,165,000.

In addition to the support of Legal Aid of North Carolina, the Dogwood Health Trust provided support to the Affordable Care Act program. With these efforts, we magnified our outreach and education. We increased our appointments by 40% and 25% more enrollments (63% of the increased consumer navigations).

Senior Dining & Wellness
BILLIE BREEDEN, DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATE NUTRITION

This year was paramount! We served over 53,000 meals to over 550 individuals. The Senior Dining and Wellness Program improved the health and wellbeing of older adults by providing nutritious hot meals from Moose Cafe that met ⅓ RDA criteria for older adults. The hot meal from Moose Cafe was the main meal of the day for 79% of the senior dining clients in a February 2021 survey. The meal sites through the City of Asheville, Black Mountain Parks & Recreation and Weaverville First Baptist never stopped serving...from congregate dining to delivery and then to curbside pick-up. COA staff and volunteers, together with these partners, worked tirelessly to ensure that these nutritional needs were met, participants had access to resources and information, and that all were safe and maintained a sense of social connection and community engagement.
COVID-19 & What Lies Ahead

When we look back at this pivotal time in our history, we will remember the grief, the toll, and also the silver linings of the pandemic. We will remember the lives lost, the lives injured, and the lives touched. We will remember the kindness and compassion of our donors, the collaboration of our partners, the grit of our staff and the commitment of our volunteers. We will ever-acknowledge the impact of the pandemic on our organization that demonstrated our agility and strength, but also showed us our vulnerabilities and areas that need to be built upon. What lies ahead, we hope, are opportunities for everyone to age successfully with equitable access to healthcare, social health as a recognized and valued aspect of the healthcare continuum, financial security, opportunities for engagement and all having their basic needs met. When we think about what has mattered most it seems to be the "little things". We believe that "little by little, a little becomes a lot" and that we have a knack for ensuring these little things make a big difference. As the aging population continues to grow rapidly in the United States and in our region, we know we have a long road ahead. We are on this journey for aging well together and we thank you for rising with us to the challenge.