

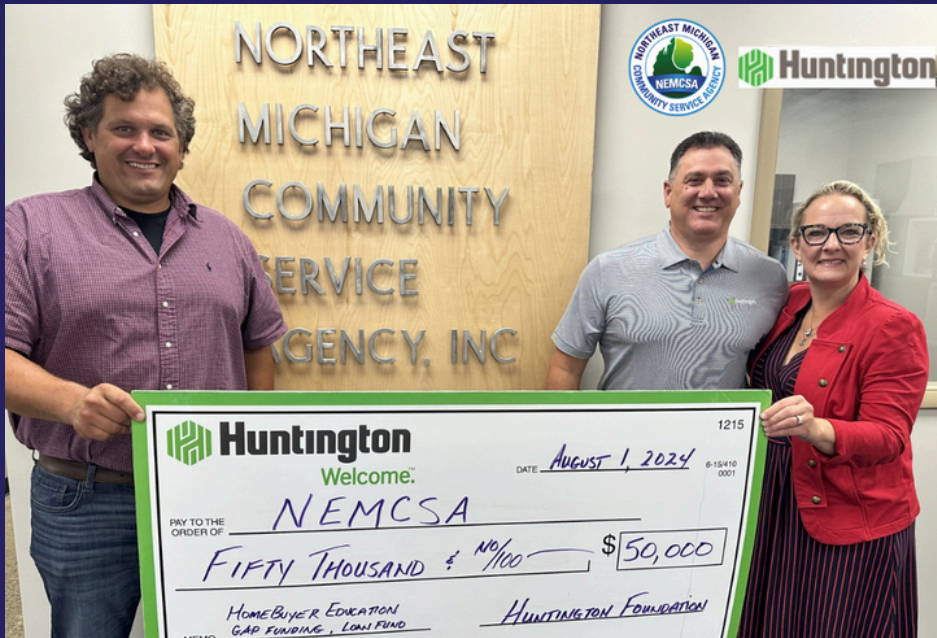
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September
2024



Thank You

Huntington Bank!



Pictured: Pete Hennard, NEMCSA Board President, Nick Florian, NEMCSA Board member and Northern MI Market President for Huntington Bank, Lisa Bolen, NEMCSA Executive Director/CEO. NEMCSA has received a generous \$50,000 donation from Huntington Bank to support critical community programs. The funds will address immediate needs in 11 counties, enhance Home Buyer Education efforts across 12 counties, and sustain NEMCSA's Employee Loan Program. Expressing her gratitude, NEMCSA's Executive Director/CEO, Lisa Bolen, said, "This funding will make a significant impact on the lives of individuals and families in Northeast Michigan, helping them achieve self-sufficiency and stability." Seth Perigo, regional president of The Huntington National Bank, emphasized their commitment, stating, "By helping families throughout Northeastern Michigan get ahead, we are laying the groundwork for stronger communities."

Program Impact

FOOD PROGRAM



As the Food Program winds down, I want to highlight the only “original” food program team member that remained with the program from the inception until the end, the one and only, Norman Apsey. This past July, Norm celebrated his 30th year anniversary with NEMCSA. He started as a contract laborer and then a few months later, started as a direct employee of NEMCSA. When he started, it was in the true beginning of the Food Program because of his passions, dedication and top-notch work ethic. The caseload back then was under 1,000 boxes per month and it grew to 4,500 and we closed out at roughly 2,850. In his 30 years of working distributions, he gave away over 1 million boxes and tons of food to hungry people and pretty much became family to them.

To say Norm was the backbone of the program is a mild understatement. His vast knowledge of the warehouse workings amazed me from day one. He could look at a product and give a rough estimate of how many packages it would make.

Although, not one for change, he always embraced it. The Food Program Manager would come to him with an idea, and he would let us know right away if it would work and give us reasons why it would not or if it would. Norm never shied away from a challenge. There were many times we were short staffed and Norm always picked up the extra work. His work ethic is one of the things that I admire most about him.

In conversations with Norm, I asked why he stayed. His response was always about giving back to those who needed some help. Back then, his wages were not great and the work was hard. Norm is an avid hunter and fisherman and likes to take off during deer season, this job allowed it. He also stated that he had three young children at home to provide for. He went where the work was. Norm also thrives on physical work, not sitting behind a desk.

In closing, Norm’s dedication to NEMCSA and to the Food Program has never gone unnoted by the people that work closely with him nor the people he served through the food program. Those that knew him knew that if they called us for help in moving things, that he would always say yes. He was always willing to help anyone, anytime. If I know one thing about him, he is not going to sit still. He will hunt, fish and forage for mushrooms and spend time with his family. I will miss you, and wish you a happy retirement.

-Tammy Dean, Food Programs Coordinator

Thank you for
your dedication to
NEMCSA, Norm!

HAPPY
Retirement!

Program Impact

FOOD PROGRAM



On behalf of NEMCSA and myself, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our amazing Food Program team who has worked tirelessly in our Food Commodity Program that served communities for over 30 years. Your incredible dedication and hard work throughout the duration, and your tireless efforts, have made a profound impact in the lives of countless individuals and families, providing not just nourishment but also hope, love and support during challenging times. As we close this chapter, please know that your contributions have not gone unnoticed; your compassion and commitment have been truly appreciated and inspiring. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission and for the countless hours you've invested in serving our community with such grace, empathy and kindness. Congratulations on a job well done and be proud of the impact you have made and the legacy you have left. We also want to thank all of our dedicated volunteers and community partners who also showed up for our community to help support our mission and keep our communities happy and healthy. As we say goodbye, we look forward to handing off this incredible program to the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan with a heavy heart, but an optimistic one. We know we leave NEMCSA's Food Program legacy in good hands and will continue to support the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan as we pass the torch. Thank you once again to everyone who played a part in making this program such a success.

-Dorothy Pinter, Community Programs Director

**Thank you to an
amazing team!**



Program Impact

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

NO EXCUSE FOR ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is any act which causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust such as a family member, friend, or caregiver. The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological, or sexual, and can include mistreatment and neglect. According to the State of Michigan, it is estimated that more than 100,000 older adults are victims of abuse and less than half of those instances are reported to authorities.

This year *Region 9 Area Agency on Aging's annual Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention Conference* was held on August 23, 2024, at the Hillman United Methodist Church to raise awareness about elder abuse. Over 90 people registered for the event.

This year's conference addressed the following topics:

- Types of Elder Abuse and How to Recognize and Report Abuse
- Scams and Fraud
- Violence in Later Life
- Financial Exploitation



Many thanks to Kayla Kelly, Michelle Marzean, and Liz Hincka from the Michigan Dept. of Health & Human Services; Trooper Jason Kunath, Michigan State Police; Jullian Ferguson and Jeanine Kaltz, Hope Shores Alliance; and Xochil Fisher, Community Financial Credit Union for sharing your knowledge and information with the attendees.



Region 9 Area Agency on Aging has been officially recognized with the 2024/2025 LGBTQ+ Affirming status by MiGen (Michigan LGBTQ+ Elders Network), Michigan's only organization focused exclusively on LGBTQ+ older adults and those who love and care for them. Through a rigorous process of auditing, training, and credentialing, we have demonstrated our commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ older adults, who comprise over 68,000 individuals across the State of Michigan. This credentialing status not only reflects our dedication but also stands as a beacon of hope and support for the LGBTQ+ community. Caitlin Kefgen, Training & Education Director for MiGen - Michigan's LGBTQ+ Elders Network is pictured here delivering training to AAA Staff at their annual August staff meeting.



Michigan Medicare Assistance Program (MMAP) Recognition event was held in Alpena on August 7th. MMAP, Inc. Executive Director was on hand to present awards to the group of volunteer and in-kind counsellors who give tirelessly of their time and talents helping Medicare beneficiaries navigate the complicated Medicare system.



Program Impact

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

School Startup Time

1,422

CHILDREN ENROLLED
IN THE HEAD START
AND GREAT START
READINESS PROGRAM

95

CLASSROOMS
FOR CHILDREN
TO LEARN &
GROW IN

26

HEAD START
AREA MANAGERS

21

EARLY HEAD
START HOME
VISITORS

21

COUNTIES
SERVED

1,380

EARLY HEAD
START CENTER
BASED HOURS

1020

HOURS OF
CLASSROOM
TIME

46

EARLY HEAD
START HOME
VISITS
(PER CHILD)

227

CHILDREN ENROLLED
IN THE EARLY HEAD
START PROGRAM

190

TEACHERS &
TEACHING
ASSISTANTS

150

CLASSROOM AIDES,
BUS DRIVERS &
SERVICE AIDES

Program Impact

BRIDGES OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

BOSS Program Highlights

The BOSS Program continues to make remarkable strides in helping participants achieve self-sufficiency and improve their lives. Here are some of the exciting accomplishments and updates from July:

Needs Assessment and Financial Assistance:

In July, a needs assessment was sent to all BOSS participants to identify their top financial needs. Assistance was also approved for each BOSS family with electric bills, up to \$500, at a critical time when MDHHS is out of funding for this service.

Group Learning Session:

The second BOSS group learning session was held and led by the fabulous NEMCSA board member Leisa Sutton of Suttons Daze. She conducted a class on pantry preservation and taught participants how to pressure can chicken! All BOSS attendees left with not only a new skill but also the supplies to use their new skill. A huge thank you to Leisa for her valuable contribution!

Current Enrollment:

The program currently has 25 BOSS families enrolled, with several on the waitlist. As soon as Chris, the new Self-Sufficiency Mentor, starts his role full-time, we will begin working with more families. The BOSS Program remains open for continuous referrals.

Participant Wins:

- A participant is enrolling in her final class for her bachelor's degree!
- A participant has multiple interviews lined up!
- A participant is meeting with MiWorks for GED.
- A participant purchased a vehicle.
- A participant finished working with MiWorks and is now enrolling in a certificate program at a local community college!
- A participant prioritized their budget and was able to cover a transportation expense on their own!
- Participant Quote: "The BOSS program has helped me more than I thought they could. I'm glad to be part of this program; it gives me a better feeling knowing people can help me get to a sustainable future."
- Participant Quote: "So far, the BOSS program has been an amazing help and support to my family. A lot more doors have opened than I ever thought possible. I can't wait to see what more we accomplish!"
- A BOSS family had a great time at Cedar Valley Fun Park, taking advantage of the free admission day. (Photos attached!)
- A participant has a job interview!
- Another BOSS family is transitioning to as-needed support!
- A participant finished her college term with a 3.93 GPA! WOW!



The BOSS Program Mentors have been exceptional in their roles, empowering families to reach their goals and work towards achieving self-sufficiency. Their dedication and passion are the driving forces behind these incredible successes.



This project was supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number SLFRF4951 awarded to The State of Michigan by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Program Impact

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

In July, NEMCSA's Community Resource Team, achieved significant milestones and made impactful contributions to the community. Their dedication and hard work continue to drive NEMCSA's mission forward, providing essential resources and support to those in need.

Community Resource Team Achievements

Madison and Amanda conducted an in-person content planning session, diving deep into important dates for the agency and individual departments to share on social media, including upcoming birthdays for NEMCSA & School Success in August. Amanda attended a 211 focus group session in Tawas, sharing valuable insights on improving resource accessibility for those seeking assistance. She also conducted in-person community visits with partners in Alpena County, including Friends Together, Hope Shores Alliance, Boys & Girls Club, MDHHS, MiWorks, Sunrise Centre, and The Salvation Army. Madison's in-person visits throughout Crawford County included the Grayling Commission on Aging, Deveraux Library, Grayling Housing Commission, MI Works, MDHHS, and Frederic Library. Amanda presented the 2023 Annual Report to the Arenac County Board of Commissioners, highlighting the successes of the BOSS program. Both Madison and Amanda assisted with the final Golden Grocery Distributions in Oscoda Twp and West Branch, extending heartfelt thanks to the Food Program Team for their dedication to serving the communities. Amanda also attended the MCA summer conference, networking with other community action agencies and presenters. Her favorite session was from the Northwest Community Action Agency on podcasting. Stay tuned for the NEMCSA podcast in 2025! Amanda also completed a segment with Wayne Metro Community Action Agency.

Support Rendered

In July, the team provided assistance to 98 individuals, families, and community partners, including 25 NEMCSA staff members. They facilitated referrals, connected individuals to valuable resources, created flyers and graphics, and continued to share important information on the Community Resource Corner pages and through social media.

Vehicle Repair Program

The Vehicle Repair Program had a significant impact this month, paying \$12,763.93 in auto repair expenses. This critical support ensured that numerous community members could maintain reliable transportation, enhancing their ability to access essential services and employment opportunities. Although auto repair assistance has not been open to new recipients, Madison and Amanda are steadily moving through their long waitlist, continuing to serve until grant funds are exhausted. This program has been a tremendous benefit in addressing this critical need in the communities.

NEMCSA Chat Team

The NEMCSA chat team assisted with 136 chats on the NEMCSA website during the month of July, providing timely support and information to community members.



Program Impact

SCHOOL SUCCESS



The School Success Program Kicked off their first team staff meeting of the year on August 19, 2024, at JJ's Steak and Pizza in Alpena. Forty-seven fresh, rejuvenated faces came together focusing on "Getting to know your Agency and Co-workers". Dorothy Pintar, Community Programs Director, kicked off the morning with a motivational speech about empowering every person to achieve their fullest potential and defend the children on your caseload like they are your own.

The speakers throughout the day consisted of some of NEMCSA's very own Community Program Directors. Doug Tallant, Weatherization Program Manager, shared a weatherization overview and the process for making referrals. Victoria Purvis, Director of Homeless and Prevention Services, provided useful information on how to guide and support School Success families experiencing housing issues. Victoria also presented about the function of the Front Desk Coordinator and current available programs. Cathy Macfalda, Human Resources Director, updated staff on the employee handbook and other important HR topics. We also were honored to have Kimberlee Hincka, CFO, and Tori Gentry, Staff Accountant, talk about retirement and Principal accounts. Tricia Grifka, Early Childhood Services Director, spoke about collaboration and longtime partnership with School Success and how that plays a role in the success of child. Amanda Bergeron, Community Resource Coordinator, and Madison Shamel, Assistant Community Resource Coordinator were kind enough to talk about the BOSS program and the resources page and last, but not least, CEO Lisa Bolen gave encouraging words about the important work of the School Success Program and thanked the team for their good work.

Thank you all for taking the time to introduce yourselves and share knowledge with the team.

The afternoon continued with the talented Elizabeth Skiba, School Success Area Manager, Kristin Berles, Budget Coordinator and Jeana Bellanger Pivot and Empower rep. refreshing staff on numerous topics.

Thank you all for your creative work and putting together a fabulous meeting. What an awesome start to the new year.

Program Impact

HOUSING

Street Outreach staff have been busy meeting with households on state land providing apartment applications, hygiene products, assisting with replacement birth certificates, and even teaching fire safety! Street Outreach staff have been notified of several encampments throughout the service area. They have been working diligently to meet with every person reported, get them resources and help them start the process of finding housing.



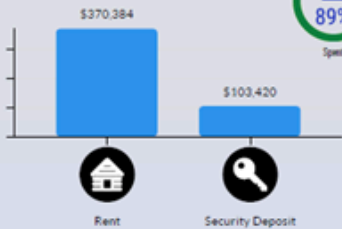
YTD Expenditures

10/1/23-9/30/24

Rapid Rehousing



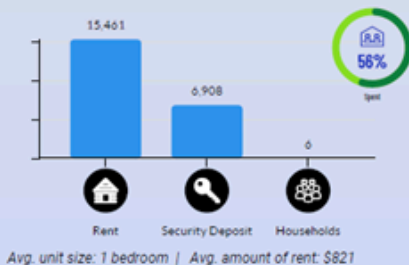
Prevention



Avg. unit size: 1.2 bedrooms | Avg. amount of rent: \$608

Avg. unit size: 1.89 bedrooms | Avg. amount of rent: \$657

Permanent Supportive Housing



Avg. unit size: 1 bedroom | Avg. amount of rent: \$821

Melanie's family of four are experiencing housing instability and are currently staying in a tent at a campground without transportation. While they wait to hear back from the apartment they applied for, NEMCSA Housing staff have been picking up and delivering weekly meals from the Meet Up and Eat Up program provided by the school! This has allowed the family access to fresh fruit and other perishable items they would not have had access to before. Melanie says, "The help from NEMCSA and programs have been a life saver this summer!"

To find out more about Homeless & Prevention Services, Call: 989-358-4678.

Program Impact

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

In the month of July, staff worked with six households to complete Pre-Purchase Counseling to better help them become prepared to complete the homebuying process, completed seven Homebuyer Education classes, and eight households participated in Rental Counseling. These households were all previously homeless and are working with staff to be able to maintain their housing.

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program currently has 27 active participants. This number is always changing as new people are enrolling or people deciding that they don't have to participate and are exiting.

To find out more about the Financial Empowerment Programs, Call: 989-358-4627.

WATER PROGRAM

During the Month of August:

\$12,806	WATER BILLS PAID	\$6,397	PLUMBING REPAIRS
\$31,605	TENATIVE PAYMENTS PENDING JOB COMPLETION	106	PEOPLE ASSISTED

To find out more about the Water Program, Call: 989-358-4675.

WEATHERIZATION

The Weatherization Department traveled to Austin Texas for a National Conference where they were able to collaborate with DOE and other grantee and sub grantees of weatherization funding. They also were able to attend first class education in weatherization, featuring time-tested techniques, cutting-edge innovation, latest developments in administrative policy and hands on training in the field by technical experts from across the U.S. The team is so grateful for the high-profile speakers, peer exchange, Building Performance Institute credit and so much more! Staff are anxious to apply all we learned to NEMCSA's program as it continues to grow.

To find out more about the Weatherization Program, Call: 989-358-4700.



Program Impact

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS



Senior Volunteer Program staff are connecting with people in several communities promoting the volunteer programs and sharing information these last months of summer.

They attended MidMichigan Community Health Fair, Sterling Community Fair with more to come. Heidi and Amy also have done Pastries with a Purpose at Ogemaw COA and Cheboygan COA to talk with seniors about volunteering in their community and giving back. RSVP Project Director, Amy Cook Otto went to Baltimore, MD for the AmeriCorps National Conference. Sessions offered included information and resources regarding recruiting volunteers, working in rural areas, grantee demos, volunteer engagement/retention and much more. Tammy Dean is full time now with the RSVP program as Services Coordinator for the NE counties. The program and staff are excited to have Tammy in the volunteer program with her community and senior adult connections.

The FGP/SCP programs brought back NEMCSA's Brooke Mainville, Special Projects Coordinator during their August In-Service meeting to continue the conversation about healthy living with a focus on brain health and aging of which exercising is a key contributor. Picture above are Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions using colorful scarves as part of an exercise routine focused the combination of improving strength, balance, and brain stimulation. The scarfs made for fun and colorful session enjoyed by all.

The afternoon session became more serious when the volunteers broke into three focus groups lead by NEMCSA's Jodie Baker, Data Development Coordinator and her team of assistants including Frances Ommani, Tracey Wood, and Amanda Bergeron to get the volunteer's thoughts on the greatest challenges of our combined communities. The FGP/SCP volunteers where thoroughly engaged in the process and proposed solutions along with the challenges. The volunteers requested Jodie return to share the combined results of the focus groups and report out what has been learned.

Pictured below is Amy at the AmeriCorps National Conference and Amy and Madison Shamel, NEMCSA's Assistant Community Resource Coordinator working together to recruit senior volunteers and increase awareness of NEMCSA programs.





“Working for Community Action is more than a job. It is a mission”
 – Lois Carson



This summer brought valuable inspiration and innovation to NEMCSA staff through two major conferences. It began with the Michigan Community Action State Conference in Port Huron, where the Leadership Development Institute honored its graduates. The conference workshops sparked excitement as they focused on expanding our programs and improving our community services.

The learning continued with last week's National Community Action Partnership conference in Seattle, attended by Lisa Bolen and Frances Ommani. This event offered valuable insights, particularly regarding the Whole Family Approach program, like our Bridges of Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) initiative. Lisa attended a workshop focused on fair wages, bringing back actionable ideas that could significantly influence our work. Additionally, the conference provided essential networking opportunities, including connections with Wipfli, the firm responsible for our agency's audits.

Attending these conferences better equipped us with fresh tools and valuable connections to enhance our impact. We anticipate exciting developments soon!

Child Care Expansion Grant Update:

Seven childcare businesses across Arenac, Iosco, and Ogemaw counties received capacity-building grants, resulting in significant expansions and improvements. These efforts led to an increase from 30 to 117 childcare slots. Notably, one site extended its hours to include weekends and evenings, and two new centers are set to open, addressing critical childcare needs in the region. See the graph for more details.

