

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

August
2025



MCA 2025 Summer Conference



NEMCSA is proud to share highlights from this year's Michigan Community Action Summer Conference! Staff spent the week connecting with colleagues from across the state, sharing ideas, and learning together. A special shoutout to the four NEMCSA team members who graduated from the Leadership Institute, a big accomplishment and a reflection of their commitment to growth and service. Executive Director & CEO, Lisa Bolen, also served as a panelist, sharing insights on community action and the importance of strategic partnership within the community and the state. This conference is always a valuable experience, a time to build connections, strengthen leadership, and bring new energy back to our communities.


Michigan's Aging Population

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has recently published the 2025 Vital Voices Study, which highlights the needs and concerns of older residents in Michigan. The organization conducted a survey involving 704 adults aged 45 and above.

Here are some of the report's key findings:

- **Financial Security:** An overwhelming majority (92%) say protecting the future of Social Security benefits is a top concern.
- **Family Caregiving:** Nearly 9 in 10 (87%) support shifting more state long-term care funding toward in-home care rather than nursing homes. Similarly, 86% back a state income tax credit for family caregivers who shoulder out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Property Taxes:** More than 8 in 10 (82%) worry that rising property taxes could make it harder to stay in their homes as they age.
- **Prescription Drug Costs:** Nearly two-thirds (65%) say they are concerned about rising prescription drug prices over the next two years. In light of these concerns, almost three-quarters (73%) favor establishing a prescription drug affordability board to help rein in prices.

For more information or to access the full survey results, visit the [AARP Website](#).



**NEMCSA'S
BIRTHDAY BASH!**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14TH
11:00AM TO 2:00PM

57TH BIRTHDAY!

2569 US 23 S, ALPENA

ENJOY ICE CREAM, GIVEAWAYS, AND FUN!

Join us to celebrate 57
years of empowering
individuals &
strengthening
communities!

Congrats Ashley!



The Community Programs Division is thrilled to welcome Ashley Gagnon as the newest member of their team, joining them as their Budget Coordinator. Ashley graduated from Northwood University in June 2014 and began her career with NEMCSA in February 2015 as an Assistant Financial Coach, taking over leadership of that program in May of the same year. Ashley is especially proud of her journey as a former Early Head Start and Head Start parent, having pursued her education while raising her three boys — a remarkable accomplishment. Her oldest son is now 22, and her twins are 16. When she's not working, Ashley enjoys watching hockey, reading, and — true to her new role — spending time with spreadsheets! Welcome, Ashley! We're excited to have you on the team!

Program Impact

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging received an Aging Achievement Award



from USAgings, the national association for Area Agencies on Aging, in partnership with Caregiving.com and Cumulus.care for its Caregiver Webinar Series. Aging Achievement Awards recognize the most contemporary, effective and replicable programs and exemplify both traditional and new strategies in a range of categories. Accepting the award at the national USAgings Conference in Chicago this past week are Jaime Carney, Associate AAA Director, and Yvette Smigelski, Director of Business/Financial Services-Aging. This award is a testament to the creative and dedicated work of Brooke Mainville, Community supports Manager who was unable to attend the conference.

Find a Caregiver Corner at your local library.

Region 9 AAA has partnered with 29 libraries throughout the region to provide dementia and caregiver-related materials for caregivers. Check out a book or toolkit to ease the stress and burdens of caregiving.



REGION 9 AREA AGENCY ON AGING PRESENTS: Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Prevention Conference

Friday, August 15, 2025
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Plainfield Township Hall
(Eagle Point Plaza)
415 East Main Street
Hale, MI 48739



Approximately one in
ten Americans aged 60+
have experienced some
form of elder abuse.

SAVE THE DATE



Why Join Us:

- Expert Speakers
- Get to know the Resources in your Community
- Complimentary Breakfast and Lunch
- Local Vendors
- Great Prizes and Giveaways!

☎ (989) 358-4630

✉ deant@nemcsa.org

🌐 www.nemcsa.org

Ombudsman Update:

The Long-Term Care Ombudsmen visited 45 AFC Homes this past quarter. Nine of the visits were routine. Only 30 AFC homes have not been visited. Regulations require visits to ten percent of the AFC Homes in a region, but it is a goal to visit them all. In addition, nine nursing homes received a routine visit.

Hot Weather Coming—Check Out Your Community Cooling Center

Region 9 AAA - Cooling Centers

County	Site	Address	City	Phone	Hours
Alcona	Senior Center	807 Barlow Road	Lincoln	989-736-8879	M-F 8am-5pm
Alpena	Senior Center	501 River Street	Alpena	989-356-3585	M-F 8am - 5pm
Arenac	Senior Center	131 S. Clyde	Omer	989-653-2692	M-F 7am - 2pm
Chchboygan	Senior Center	1531 Sand Road	Chchboygan	231-627-7234	M-F 8am - 5pm
	Wolverine Senior Center	6554 Wolverine Road	Wolverine	231-525-8969	M-F 8am - 5pm
	The Lord's Kitchen	674 Court Street	Chchboygan	231-627-1173	M-Sunday 24 hours
Crawford	Senior Center	4388 W. M-72	Grayling	989-348-7123	M-Th 8:30am - 6pm F 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Iosco	Hale Senior Center	310 N. Washington	Hale	989-728-4251	M-F 9am - 2:30pm
	Oscoda Senior Center	653 State Street SW	Oscoda	989-739-3668	M-F 9am - 3pm
	Sand Lake Senior	4059 Indian Lake Road	National City	989-469-9361	M,W,Th,F 9am - 3pm
	Tawas Senior Center	312 Newman Street	East Tawas	989-362-6892	M-F 9am - 3pm
Montmorency	Atlanta Senior Center	11790 M-33 N	Atlanta	989-785-3932	M-Th 9am - 5pm
	Hillman Senior Center	431 Pine View Court	Hillman	989-742-3013	M-Th 9am - 5:30pm
	Lewiston Senior Center	2811 Kneeland Street	Lewiston	989-786-3124	M-F 9am - 5:30pm
Ogemaw	Senior Center	1528 S. M-33	West Branch	989-345-3010	M-F 8am - 4pm
Oscoda	Senior Center	429 Mt. Tom Road	Mio	989-826-3025	M-F 8am - 4pm
Otsego	County Sportsplex	1250 Gornick Avenue	Gaylord	989-731-3546	M-F 8:30am - 5:30 pm Sat/Sun 10am - 4pm
	Senior Center	1165 Elkview Avenue	Gaylord	989-732-1122	M-F 8:30am - 3:30pm
Presque Isle	Posen Senior Center	6520 Darga Highway	Posen	989-766-8191	M-Th 9am - 5pm Sunday 10am - 4pm
	Onaway Senior Center	4203 S. Lynn Street	Onaway	989-733-2559	M-Th 9am - 2pm Sunday 9am - 2pm
Roscommon	Commission on Aging	1015 Short Drive	Prudenville	989-366-0205	M-F 9am - 3pm
	Houghton Lake Sr. Ctr	2625 Townline Road	Houghton Lake	989-202-2008	M-F 9am - 3pm
	Roscommon Senior Ctr	510 South Street	Roscommon	989-275-6232	M-F 9am - 3pm
	St. Helen Senior Center	10493 E. Airport Road	St. Helen	989-389-3684	M-F 9am - 3pm

*Most Township Halls are open as cooling centers during normal business hours and can be opened after hours and on weekends if needed.



Laurie Sauer, AAA Director, and Corrine Wozniak, CHW of Michigan Health, met with Rep. Cam Cavitt to advocate on behalf of older adults, the MI Choice Program, and Community Health Workers.

Program Impact

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES



Celebrating 60 Years of Head Start



A Legacy of Opportunity, A Future of Promise

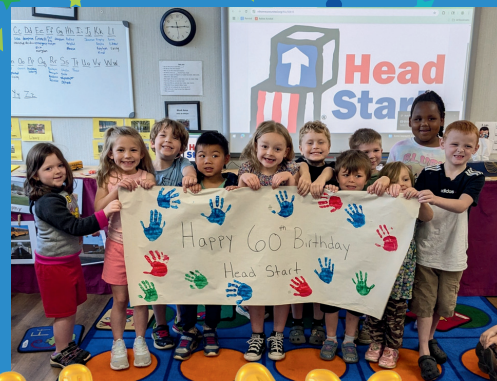
This year marks a very special milestone for Head Start: 60 years of providing comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and family support services to children and families across the country. Since its founding in 1965, Head Start has reached over 37 million children, giving them the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life.

Here at NEMCSA, we're proud to be a part of this incredible legacy. Our classrooms joined the national celebration by engaging children in activities that helped them learn more about the program they're part of. From making birthday banners to creating art projects, our children brought joy and creativity to this milestone.

More than just a birthday party, these celebrations were an opportunity to talk with children about friendship, helping others, and being part of a community. Staff helped connect the occasion to the values that have guided Head Start for six decades: equity, inclusion, respect, and a deep belief in every child's potential.

As we honor the past, we also look ahead. The work we do today—together—will help shape the next 60 years of Head Start. Thank you to our dedicated staff, committed board members, families, and community partners for helping ensure that the Head Start mission continues to thrive.

Here's to 60 years of impact, and many more to come!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Program Impact

BRIDGES OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

BOSS Program Success Stories

The BOSS Program continues to support transformative progress across Northeast Michigan. This past month, there were several inspiring participant achievements:

- A BOSS participant test drove a vehicle this week and is working with a combination of assistance with MiWorks & Michigan Rehabilitation Services for the purchase of a vehicle.
- A BOSS participant sold out of her baked goods at another farmers market, this time in the rain in Tawas!
- A BOSS participant is enrolling in a pharmacy tech program!
- A BOSS family completed their emotional resiliency course.
- A BOSS family completed their financial literacy course.
- A BOSS participant is researching RN programs to apply for.
- A BOSS family is all caught up on bills.
- A BOSS participant has an interview with AACU.
- Mandi, a BOSS graduate, was honored as one of Michigan Community Action's 2024 Clients of the Year at Legislative Day at the Capitol. She shared her powerful journey—overcoming homelessness, reuniting with her children, achieving homeownership, returning to school to study law, and finding hope again. She also advocated for continued support by meeting with a representative from Rep. Cam Cavitt's office to share how the BOSS program and Community Action changed her life.



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.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



June Impact:

- 107 Individuals Assisted
- 48 Referrals Made
- 46 Resources & Information Shared
- 57 Contacts via CRC Line



Community Engagement:

- Amanda & Madison offered a four-hour Poverty Training to the Boys & Girls club of Alpena.
- Amanda presented NEMCSA's 2024 Annual Report to the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioner's.
- Amanda & Hector shared a table at the Alpena County Project Connect Event on June 16th. Chantel & Monica from Head Start did an incredible job with the organization and offerings at this event!

Seven Episodes
Now Available!

💡 Have ideas or want to join as a guest?

Share your suggestions, topics, or feedback by completing the form here:

[Podcast Feedback Form](#)



ALLISON URLAUB

**WELCOME
TO THE TEAM**

Allison is helping support marketing, social media, podcast production, content creation, press releases, and more in her role as Summer Intern! The team is thrilled to have her on board!



CRC@NEMCSA.ORG



989-358-4757

Program Impact

SCHOOL SUCCESS

In June 2025, the administrators of the School Success Partnership Program (SSPP) submitted the official 2024–2025 State Evaluation Report. This comprehensive annual report serves as a key accountability and planning tool, reflecting the program’s ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and student success. Each year, SSPP aligns its efforts with clearly defined program objectives and measurable outcomes. These benchmarks are used to monitor progress, assess impact, and highlight areas of achievement across participating districts. The evaluation not only demonstrates the effectiveness of the program but also informs strategic decisions for future implementation and resource allocation.

School Success Partnership Program Objectives:

1. Improving school attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism.
2. Increasing academic performance, with an emphasis on math and reading.
3. Identifying barriers to attendance and academic success and connecting families to appropriate resources.
4. Increasing parental involvement in students’ education and community life.

2024–25 Program Outcomes:

- 99% reduction in absenteeism
- 86% overall academic improvement
- 72% improved reading skills
- 74% improved math skills
- 2,713 referrals to resources to alleviate barriers
- 93% of parents increased parental involvement



Program Impact

HOUSING

Housing Pathways for Young Adults



The Youth and Young Adult Program has recently received a six-month extension and is able to offer services under this term until March 2027. There are currently twelve individuals enrolled in the Street Outreach Program, and staff are actively working with them to obtain permanent housing or move into a transitional housing unit. Since the program started in January, staff have been able to fill five transitional units and have spent \$17,996 in rent and security deposits. Three participants have also been enrolled in the rapid rehousing program and have spent \$15,389 in rent and security deposits. This month, the program has purchased groceries for several households, bus tickets, and various household items.



Jack & Brooke!



The Homeless & Prevention team welcomed two new Housing Resource Specialists! Jack will be assisting with coverage of Iosco, Alpena, and Alcona counties. Brooke is the main Housing Resource Specialist for Alpena, Alcona, Montmorency, and Presque Isle. The team is excited to have them join them in their mission to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time!

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

Program Impact

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Housing Counseling

In the month of July, staff completed six Rental Counseling appointments. These appointments were with formerly homeless individuals that had been housed by Homeless Prevention staff. The participants are getting ready to end their financial assistance through NEMCSA and met with staff to complete budgeting to make sure they are able to maintain their housing.

Staff also had seven participants using eHome America. We currently offer coupons to make the online class free thanks to Huntington Bank. Of those seven that completed Homebuyer Education, four participants also met with staff to complete Pre-Purchase Counseling to make sure they were comfortable with moving forward with the homebuying process.

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program currently has twenty participants. MSDHA recently reopened the HCV waiting list and has begun to house individuals. We expect to see a client count increase due to new people obtaining HCV.

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

WATER PROGRAM

**In July, The Water Affordability Program
successfully provided the following assistance:**

\$11,610

WATER BILLS PAID

\$6,000

PLUMBING BILLS PAID

22

HOMES ASSISTED TOTAL



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

Program Impact

WEATHERIZATION

The Weatherization Program is proud to announce they completed 105 homes and provided 2.5 million dollars in direct assistance at NO COST to their clients during the period of 7/1/24 through 6/30/2025. Some services they provide include but are not limited to: furnace tune up and replacement, hot water heater replacement, insulation installment, door assessment/ replacement, light bulb replacement, CO2 detector installment, smoke alarm installment and several other measures are used to not only assist in making their monthly bills affordable but also assist in making their homes safe.

Here are some weatherization tips from NEMCSA's Weatherization Inspectors to be aware of:

- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to prevent drafts.
- Insulate!!! Adequate insulation in your attic and walls can significantly reduce heat loss.
- Upgrade your thermostat- Install a programmable thermostat to regulate heating and cooling more efficiently.
- Conduct regular maintenance- Schedule maintenance with a licensed technician to ensure your heating system operates more economically.
- Unplug and turn off!!! Unplug electronic devices when not in use and turn off lights when leaving a room.
- Use energy-efficient lightbulbs. Switch to LED or CFL bulbs to save on lighting costs.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

RSVP

The RSVP Senior Volunteer Program continues to move forward with volunteers and opportunities for seniors to serve in Crawford and Roscommon Counties. There have been nine new volunteers joining the program since the middle of May. They are serving as home delivery meal drivers, non-emergency medical transportation drivers, museum guides/display helpers, and helping at their local COA. The program is being advertised at local community and senior fairs during the summer months.

*We ♥ our
Volunteers*

Program Impact

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

FOSTER GRANDPARENT/SENIOR COMPANIONS

It is with deep sadness and sincere disappointment we share the news NEMCSA's AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs are ending. The Foster Grandparent program came to a close following the end of the 2024 – 2025 school year, the Senior Companion program is slated to end all volunteer activities September 13th and program staff laid off September 26th. The impact covers the NEMCSA's core service area plus Roscommon County. The closure is happening because the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has not released the funding that was already approved by Congress through the law "H.R. 1968 – the Full Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act of 2025". Without this funding, we are no longer able to continue the programs. The impact on our area is vast and extends far beyond our low-income, senior volunteers.



A few facts about our volunteer programs:

- NEMCSA has sponsored the Foster Grandparent program for five decades and the Senior Companion program for four. NEMCSA was seven years old when the first of three senior volunteer programs, the Foster Grandparent program, were adopted by the agency.
- During the program year of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025:
 - 25 Foster Grandparent volunteers assisted 119 of students from Head Start to 4th grade to improve academic performance and social/emotional skills. Their commitment and impact on student success will pay many dividends towards the students improved academics and future economic prospects.
 - 27 Senior Companion volunteers provided companionship to 89 seniors at risk of social isolation. As friendly visitors, they can reduce social isolation and feelings of loneliness. According to the Center of Disease Control, about 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. report feeling lonely and about 1 in 4 report not having social and emotional support. Social isolation and loneliness put a person at risk of developing serious mental and physical health conditions. Our Senior Companions bring dignity, caring, and support to aging!
- Average income of our Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion volunteers is \$17,771 or 118% poverty. During the July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 program year, the average stipend earned by our volunteers is just over \$3,000, a 14% increase in their discretionary income and the great benefit of the \$4 an hour stipend is it is excluded as income and will not negatively impact a volunteer's access to assistance.

Serving alongside our volunteers over the past nine and half years has been one of the greatest honors of my and Leslie's careers. Our work has been far more than jobs for Leslie and me – it has been a calling, a joy, and a privilege made meaningful by the compassion, commitment, and impact of our volunteers. They will be greatly missed by many; students, teachers, other seniors, and the many organizations that connect the volunteers to others.