

## Winter Newsletter 2022



*Helping older adults and their families age successfully*

### **SEMAAA**

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## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

### AARP Announced Minnesota Joins Network of Age-Friendly States & Communities

*From the Press Office of Governor Tim Walz*

ST. PAUL, MN – AARP announced that Minnesota has become the tenth state to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. States that are a part of this network commit to engaging older residents in efforts to improve that state's infrastructure, systems, and social environment.

**"I am extremely proud to see Minnesota recognized as an official Age-Friendly State,"** said Governor Tim Walz. **"I am committed to keeping Minnesota a state where people of all ages can live life to the fullest. We're working to ensure that Minnesota offers the financial security, health care, housing, transportation, and social services necessary for all people to retire and live out their golden years in a safe and dignified fashion."**

**"We know our state is aging, and our administration has always been committed to making sure everyone has an opportunity to sit at the decision-making table,"** said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. **"Joining this network acknowledges the work we have done to make sure these seats are open for our aging population and support Minnesotans of all ages."**

**"Well-designed, livable communities promote wellbeing, independence and resilience, sustain economic growth, and make for happier, healthier residents,"** said Cathy McLeer, AARP Minnesota State Director. **"Governor Walz, the Minnesota Legislature and the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota have taken important action to ensure our state adapts to the needs of our aging population and changing world."**

**"Joining the Network today represents an important leadership milestone in ensuring that our state seizes the unprecedented opportunities we have with a growing aging demographic,"** said Sherrie Pugh, Founding Chair of the Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota Working Together. **"We are well-positioned to make Minnesota a better place to grow older – not just for some, but for all."**

Thirteen Minnesota communities joined AARP's network prior to the state's enrollment: Alexandria, Brooklyn Park, Duluth, Hennepin County, Lake County, Maple Grove, Minneapolis, Northfield, Oakdale, Olmsted County, Princeton, St. Cloud and Wyoming.

In 2019, Governor Walz issued Executive Order 19-38 to establish the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota charged with developing recommendations to his office and the legislature. Based on those recommendations, in 2021 the Minnesota Legislature reauthorized the Council to operate through the 2024 fiscal year, appropriated \$3.9M for its operations and local Age-Friendly grants, and directed the state to join AARP's network.

The Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota meets on a bi-monthly basis via video conference and its meetings are open to the public, posted at [www.mn.gov/dhs/age-friendly-mn](http://www.mn.gov/dhs/age-friendly-mn).

**Learn more about AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities statewide and nationwide at [www.aarp.org/agefriendly](http://www.aarp.org/agefriendly).**

# Board Member Openings

- \* **Dodge County**
- \* **Fillmore County**
- \* **Houston County**
- \* **Rice County**
- \* **Member At-Large**

The **SE MN Area Agency on Aging** is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and has member representation from the eleven counties we serve (*Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona*).

One third of the members are elected each year for the three-year terms. Board members serve as volunteers and must reside in the county they represent. At least fifty percent of board members must be over age sixty. The agency may also fill up to four additional At-Large positions. We would love to have you!

## **Interested in more information?**

### ***Questions?***

***Let's get in touch!***

Applications for Board Membership can be obtained by calling 507-288-6944 or reaching us by email at [semaaa@semaaa.org](mailto:semaaa@semaaa.org).



# Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment & General Enrollment Periods



The busy Medicare Annual Open Enrollment Period kicked off last year on October 15th and just concluded on December 7th.

**Senior LinkAge Line®** staff assisted thousands of Minnesota Medicare beneficiaries with navigating, enrolling, or changing their Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plan options during this active period. The conclusion of the Annual Open Enrollment Period ushered in two more enrollment periods at the beginning of **2022**:

**The Medicare Advantage open enrollment period started on January 1st and continues through March 31st.** This period allows beneficiaries who are already enrolled in Medicare Advantage to:

- \* Switch to Original Medicare, a Medigap policy and enroll in a Part D plan. (Beneficiaries applying for Medigap/supplemental coverage might be subject to underwriting depending on circumstances).
- \* Switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan.
- \* Note: Only one plan change is allowed during this window.

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**800-333-2433**



**The general Medicare enrollment period  
also began on January 1st and runs through  
March 31st.**

This enrollment period is for people who didn't sign up for Part B when they were first eligible and who do not have access to a special enrollment period for Part B.

The general enrollment period can also be used by people who must pay a premium for Medicare Part A and who didn't enroll in Part A when they were first eligible.

**If you enroll during the general enrollment period, your coverage will take effect July 1st.**

**Understanding Medicare can sometimes be complicated.**

If you need fair and unbiased help, you can

**call Minnesota's Senior LinkAge Line® at 800-333-2433.**

A trained specialist can help you navigate these enrollment periods and help you compare plans so you can choose the one that best fits your needs.

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**SENIOR LINKAGE LINE**

**800-333-2433**

# Upcoming Virtual Classes

To register, visit [www.EventBrite.com/o/semaaa-34313681085](http://www.EventBrite.com/o/semaaa-34313681085)

## Medicare 101

Everything you need to know about Medicare

Learn about Medicare Parts A, B, C, D and additional insurance options.

**We'll help you understand the enrollment process and options that affect personal costs.**

Thursday, February 10th at 5:30 PM

Wednesday, March 16th at 5:30 PM

**Virtual and FREE!**  
**Zoom link** will be  
emailed to you  
from SEMAAA.org



MINNESOTA

SENIOR LINKAGE LINE

## Planning and Paying for Long Term Care

This presentation will provide you with information on why and how to plan and pay for your future long-term care needs.

Tuesday, March 18th at 5:30 PM

# 2023 Grants to Support Community Based Services and Dementia Care

The State of Minnesota has two funding announcements currently open to create services that meet the needs of the state's aging population:

The [Live Well at Home Grant](#) is focused on services that support older adults wishing to remain in their home as they age. The Live Well at Home Grant is an annual funding opportunity through the MN Department of Human Services. The RFP opened on January 24th and closes on April 1st. *To learn more about the application and get your questions answered, plan on attending the Responders Conference on February 22nd from 1:00-2:30. [Link to RFP](#).*

The [MBA Dementia Grant](#) targets programs that support individuals living with dementia, their caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

The MBA Dementia Grant is an annual funding opportunity through the MN Board on Aging. The application deadline is March 25th. [Link to RFP](#).

**Both grants run from July 1st 2022 - June 30th 2023.**

SEMAAA's Eldercare Development Program staff are available to offer technical assistance for these funding opportunities. Please contact **Dan Conway** at: [dan@semaaa.org](mailto:dan@semaaa.org) or **Chersten Keillor** at: [chersten@semaaa.org](mailto:chersten@semaaa.org) if you have questions about the grants.



# Federal Communications Commission launches the Affordable Connectivity Project (ACP)

ACP provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

**Enrollment in the ACP is now open for households with at least one member qualifying under any of the following criteria:**

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. (If you are a household of one with a monthly income of \$2936 or less, or a household of two with a monthly income of \$3840 or less, you may qualify)
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline.
- Participates in tribal-specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision.
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year.
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.



SENIOR LINKAGE LINE

*Call the **Senior LinkAge Line®** at 800-333-2433*

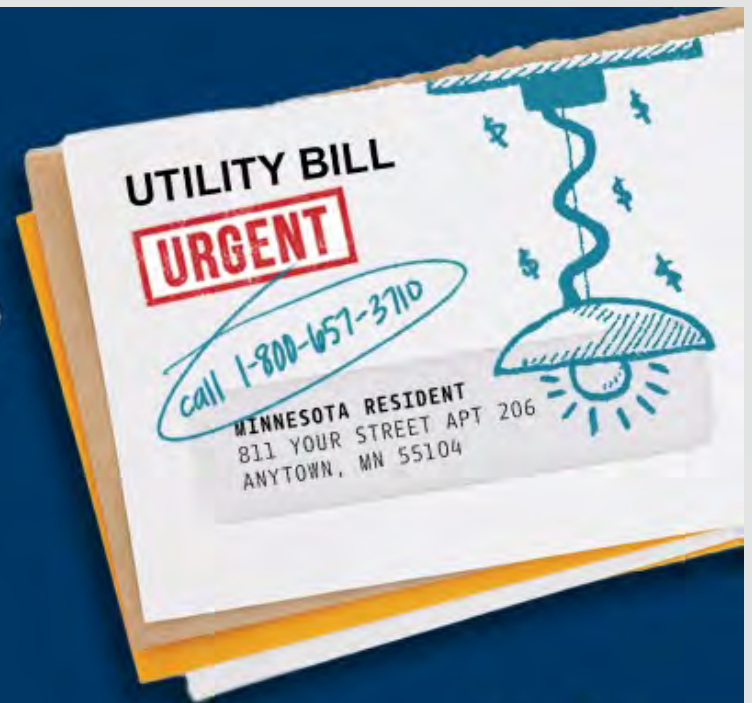
*to get an application.*



# Need **help** with your utility bills?

Up to \$2,000 to pay  
your energy bills

Apply for Minnesota's **Energy Assistance Program**  
at [mn.gov/energyassistance](https://mn.gov/energyassistance)



## Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

The Energy Assistance Program helps pay for home heating and water costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified households. The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program.

- Grants are paid directly to your energy provider, or utility company, for your bill.
- Grants range from \$300 - \$2,000
- Grants are available to renters and homeowners.
- Grants are based on energy cost, household size, and income.

Grants may be given to households with income at or below 60 percent of the state median income. If you are a household of one with a monthly income of \$2936 or less, or a household of two with a monthly income of \$3840 or less, you may qualify.

*Call the **Senior LinkAge Line®** at 800-333-2433  
to get connected to your local EAP provider or  
get an application.*



# **Southeastern Minnesota AREA AGENCY on AGING** *New Staff Spotlight!*

## **Penny Schmit, Grants Administrator**

Penny has been with SEMAAA since fall of 2021 and we have decided that she's a keeper! With her background in grant work, she makes a great addition to our finance team. Get to know Penny:

***Favorite Food:*** Pasta

***Dream Vacation:*** Belize

***Pets:*** Her pups, Pippi and Lola, and a dozen chickens!

***Hero:*** Freddy Mercury

***Hobby:*** Four wheeling



### **2022 SEMAAA BOARD**

**Jenelle Cummings** — Chair, Mower  
**Jean Eaton** — Vice Chair, Freeborn  
**Mike Hancock** — Secretary, Olmsted  
**Marie Hlava**, Treasurer, at Large  
**Dave Vandergon** — Goodhue  
**Karen Hanson** — Winona  
**Dr. Dwight Jennings** — at Large  
**Margaret Cook** — at Large  
**Rita Fox** — Wabasha  
**Valerie Knutson** — Steele

### **Get on board!**

SEMAAA is currently accepting applications for new board members! Please contact Laurie Brownell for an application:

[laurie@semaaa.org](mailto:laurie@semaaa.org)

**Dodge County** - OPEN

**Fillmore County** - OPEN

**Houston County** - OPEN

**Rice County** - OPEN

### **2022 SEMAAA STAFF**

- **Laurie Brownell** – Executive Director
- **Anna Thomson**– Administrative Assistant
- **Kim Voth** – Financial Director & Grants Manager
- **Laurie Marreel** – Grants Administrator
- **Patti Schad** – Finance Assistant
- **Penny Schmit** - Grants Administrator
- **Annie Avery** – Senior LinkAge Line® Coordinator
- **Jerry Roberts** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Starla Inman** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Chad Wojchik** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Jone Trapp** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Tambi Lokken** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Laurie Magnus** – Senior Linkage Line® Specialist
- **Dan Conway** – Lead Eldercare Developer
- **Chersten Keillor** – Eldercare Developer
- **Lori Wacek** – Community Living Coordinator
- **Emily Krowiorz** – Community Living Specialist
- **Chris Johnson** – Community Living Specialist
- **Sara Kohrs** – Community Living Specialist
- **Jay Hall** – Community Living Specialist
- **Camille Bruns** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Pam Speltz** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Katie Shimek** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Nicole Cummings** – Preadmission Screening Specialist