



Southeastern Minnesota
AREA AGENCY on AGING



**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2022

In this issue...

2022 Year in Review with Executive Director, Laurie Brownell: Making Nutritious Meals a Priority	3
SEMAAA Nutrition by the Numbers	4
2022 Snapshot: COVID & Carryover Funding	5
2022 Financial Summary	6
Age Friendly Community Highlights	7
Senior LinkAge Line® & Preadmission Screening Testimonials	8
Food Support for Older Adults	9
2022 in Photos: Partnerships at Work in the Community	10 - 15
Board Chair Report	16
Return to Community Recap	17
SEMAAA Staff & Board	20

Pictured on Cover: Mary and Karen (NIA staff) puzzling after house chores

2022 Year in Review - Making Nutritious Meals a Priority



At the beginning of 2022, I don't think we would have predicted that our congregate meals program would nearly reach pre-pandemic levels from 2019 and home delivered meals would exceed 2019 by just over 40%. It is truly amazing to see the number of congregate sites that have returned to serving meals in the familiar spaces at community centers and older adult housing complexes. SEMAAA's Congregate provider, **Semcac**, deserves credit for reaching out to older adults and encouraging them to come back to dining sites and re-connect with friends and neighbors.

The SE region has two Home Delivered Meals (HDM) providers – **Three Rivers Community Action Program** and **Semcac**. With a combination of Title IIIC-2 funds, American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds and waiver support, both providers were able to expand to new communities including Hayfield (Dodge), Kenyon (Goodhue), and Lonsdale (Rice). In 2022, congregate sites hosted educational events with **Bridges Health** and evidenced-based exercise programs like **Bingocize**.

The most impactful testimonials are from older adults who use these services - the following are excerpts from letters written to Semcac Senior Nutrition that show clients' sincere appreciation of Home Delivered Meals:

Just a quick note to say thank you to all of you who work so hard to make Meals on Wheels available to all who need them. I recently suffered a series of small strokes, and I can no longer drive. It is difficult to get to the store for groceries and I never was good at cooking. Also, it is sometimes hard to make a nice meal for just one person. I now look forward to a nice meal instead of just a sandwich or bowl of cereal.

Thank you to all who are responsible for providing the food for the Meals on Wheels Program. I am a 90-year-old widow, living alone. I had COVID last winter with a long recovery. I did a lot of delivery of meals years ago when I was able to and I appreciate Dennis, who delivers my meals. I especially enjoy Bratwurst w/Kraut, lasagna, and the nice variety of desserts. Just want you to know I appreciate your service, thank you!

Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging and the more than 40 partners in the Senior Meals and Services Coalition began to draw attention in 2022 to serious underfunding for home-delivered meals and related nutrition services for older adults. Food insecurity disproportionately affects older individuals from low income, BIPOC, and rural communities with limited access to transportation. The Senior Meals Coalition has been active in advocating for a \$20M biennial increase to base state funding of \$5.39M that has not increased in decades.

Call to action: Please contact your legislatures to support SF 2224-HF2523 and tell your story.



Laurie Brownell

Executive Director



Please visit [m4a's website](http://m4a.org) for updated information on senior meals advocacy efforts at www.mn4a.org

2022 Meals by the Numbers

136,409

Home Delivered Meals



1,290

Clients

2022 Totals

271,929

Total Meals Served

135,520

Congregate Meals



2,664

Clients

3,952

Total Clients Served

*Preliminary 2022 data



Winona State University Bridges Health students provide healthcare screening checks to older adults in rural communities in SE MN.

"I love seeing and learning from the students. If they were not here, I would not pay attention to things like my health, you know - blood pressure, weight, what I eat. I don't have insurance so going to the clinic is not an option for me. Knowing this is here gives me hope."

2022 Snapshot of COVID/Carryover Funding

CARES ACT

Neighbors in Action Houston County - CARES III-B funding for homemaker program to purchase equipment. (See for yourself on page 13!)

Winona State University Bridges Health: CARES III-B and CARES III-E funding for improved dental hygiene for older adults by using technology (more on page 4).

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP)

Neighbors In Action La Crescent - III-B funds for Chore, Homemaker and Assisted Transportation to reach isolated, older adults (see them “in action” on pages 12 & 13).

Winona State University Bridges Health – III-B funds for non-evidence-based programs designed to increase preventative health screening with aspects of physical, oral, emotional, intellectual, and social health. Telephone Reassurance calls will be conducted by nursing and social work students to reduce the risk of social isolation/depression (more on page 4).

Mower County Seniors - III-E funds for Caregiver Support Groups and Respite (photos on page 14). Outreach to 4 organizations that serve minority communities.

Family Service Rochester – III-B funds for Home Modification, Visiting and Assisted Transportation (see their work on page 15!).

Olmsted Medical Center and Elder Network – III-D funds for PEARLS

Semcac – IIID funds for Bingocize

IIIE CARRYOVER

Elder Network - Funds to provide outreach in rural areas, recruit volunteers, and provide caregiver respite and caregiver counseling in Dodge County. Funds for Caregiver Training/Caregiver Out of Home Respite in Olmsted County (see the Elder Network on pages 10 & 11).

IIIB CARRYOVER

Family Service Rochester - Rice County Chore, Homemaker, Mental Health Counseling (pics page 15).

Elder Network – Technology Assistance Program

Winona Friendship Center - Chore



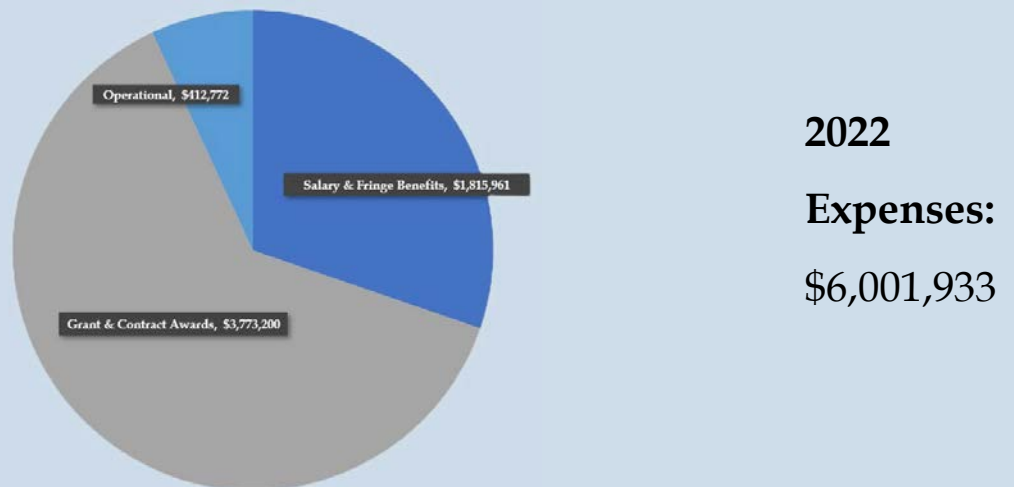
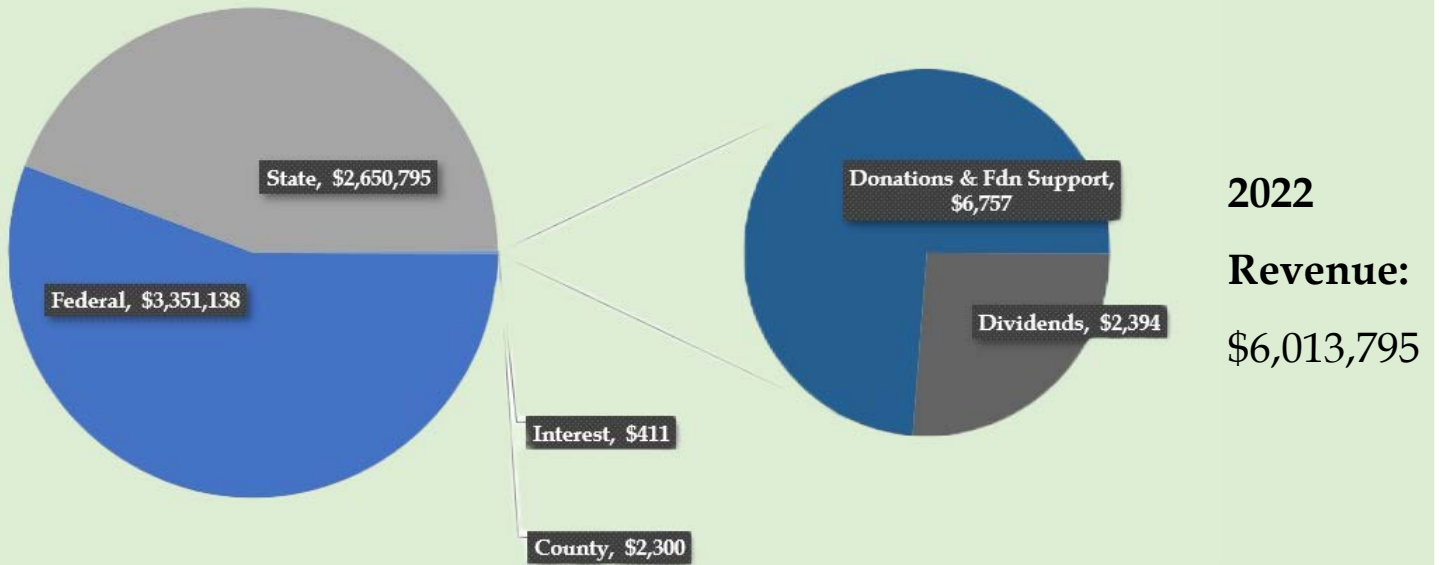
2022 Financial Summary

Support and Revenue

Federal	\$	3,351,138
State	\$	2,650,795
County	\$	2,300
Interest	\$	411
Dividends	\$	2,394
Donations & Fdn Support	\$	6,757
Total Revenue	\$	6,013,795

Expenses

Salary & Fringe Benefits	\$	1,815,961
Grant & Contract Awards	\$	3,773,200
Operational	\$	412,772
Total Expenses	\$	6,001,933
Revenue Over Expenses	\$	11,862



Age Friendly Community Highlights

Age Friendly work is meant to prepare states and communities for a rapidly aging population and creates a process and strategy to meet the needs of older adults and everyone in between. This demographic shift is already impacting our region and can be especially problematic in rural areas. Addressing gaps in the 8 domain areas ensures communities are more livable, affordable, accessible, and better designed in ways that truly benefit everyone. We know older adults want to age in place, but can only make this a reality if there are improvements in the physical design and social environments of communities. We are excited to be able to support this.



Currently, SE MN has seven communities or counties working through the process of becoming Age Friendly. The state of MN is also a member of the network and committed to Age Friendly planning. In total, MN has 16 communities who have officially applied to be members of the network. To learn more about these cities and Minnesota's Age Friendly efforts and action plans go the [MN Age Friendly Hub](#).

The SE MN communities or counties involved include:

- Albert Lea
- Fillmore County
- Northfield
- Olmsted County
- Oronoco
- Pine Island
- Wabasha

SEMAAA staff [Dan Conway](#) and [Chersten Keillor](#) provide TA to communities interested in learning more about this initiative and process. Additional resources and examples of what communities are doing to become Age Friendly can be found on [AARP's website](#).

Stats & Comments from Senior Linkage Line® & Preadmission Screening Consumers



"I appreciate you going the extra mile for this individual. It really shows your big heart!"

"Thank you for being one of the only places that answers their phones with actual people."

2022

During the 2022 Medicare Open Enrollment season, SEMAAA SLL staff took over 4200 calls.

During the other months of 2022, they took approximately 1200 calls a month.

Averaged 1413 calls a month from October to December.

Provided 41 presentations and information at various health fairs.

Partnered with other AAA's to promote virtual classes related to Medicare, Planning & Paying for Long-term Care, and Fraud topics.

The Preadmission Screening team processed between 350-400 screenings each month.

Staff partnered with Return to Community staff to provide virtual outreach events to all nursing homes, hospitals, and clinics.

"Thank you for your efforts, prompt reply, and ongoing investigation. Much appreciated!"

"Thank you for your response and the information provided. This will help a lot!"

SLL Testimonial:

"Marge" called the Senior LinkAge Line looking for assistance with her prescription for Nucala. She was paying a \$900 copay for each injection and was required to receive the injection in her clinic. She was going to be traveling, so going into the clinic was not feasible.

Marge had tried to work with her insurance plan to allow self-injections, but they denied it. A Senior LinkAge Line specialist from SEMAAA connected her with a patient assistance program that provided the medication for FREE, plus she would be able to self-inject the Nucala.

Once this was all arranged, Marge called the specialist back to thank her for her assistance and to report how thrilled she was with the service she received.

During the pandemic, Minnesota was able to temporarily provide extra Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits known as Emergency SNAP, or E-SNAP. Federal officials have declared the COVID Emergency SNAP benefits will end with most households getting their last Emergency SNAP payment in March.

SNAP benefits are dependent on household size and income. Standard SNAP benefits will return in April as extra COVID emergency SNAP ends. If nothing has changed, your SNAP benefits will return to an amount close to what you received prior to the pandemic. This is not good news as many people are still struggling with financial challenges.

50% of seniors in Minnesota who are eligible for SNAP benefits are not getting them. If you are over 60 and have an income of less than \$1,755 for a household of one or less than \$2,371 for a household of two, you may qualify. If you qualify, your benefits are put on an electronic benefits card, like a cash card. You use the card to buy food at any store that accepts SNAP benefits.

To learn more about the program and to get an application, call your county Human Services office or the **Senior LinkAge Line® at 800-333-2433**.

Where can I get other food help?

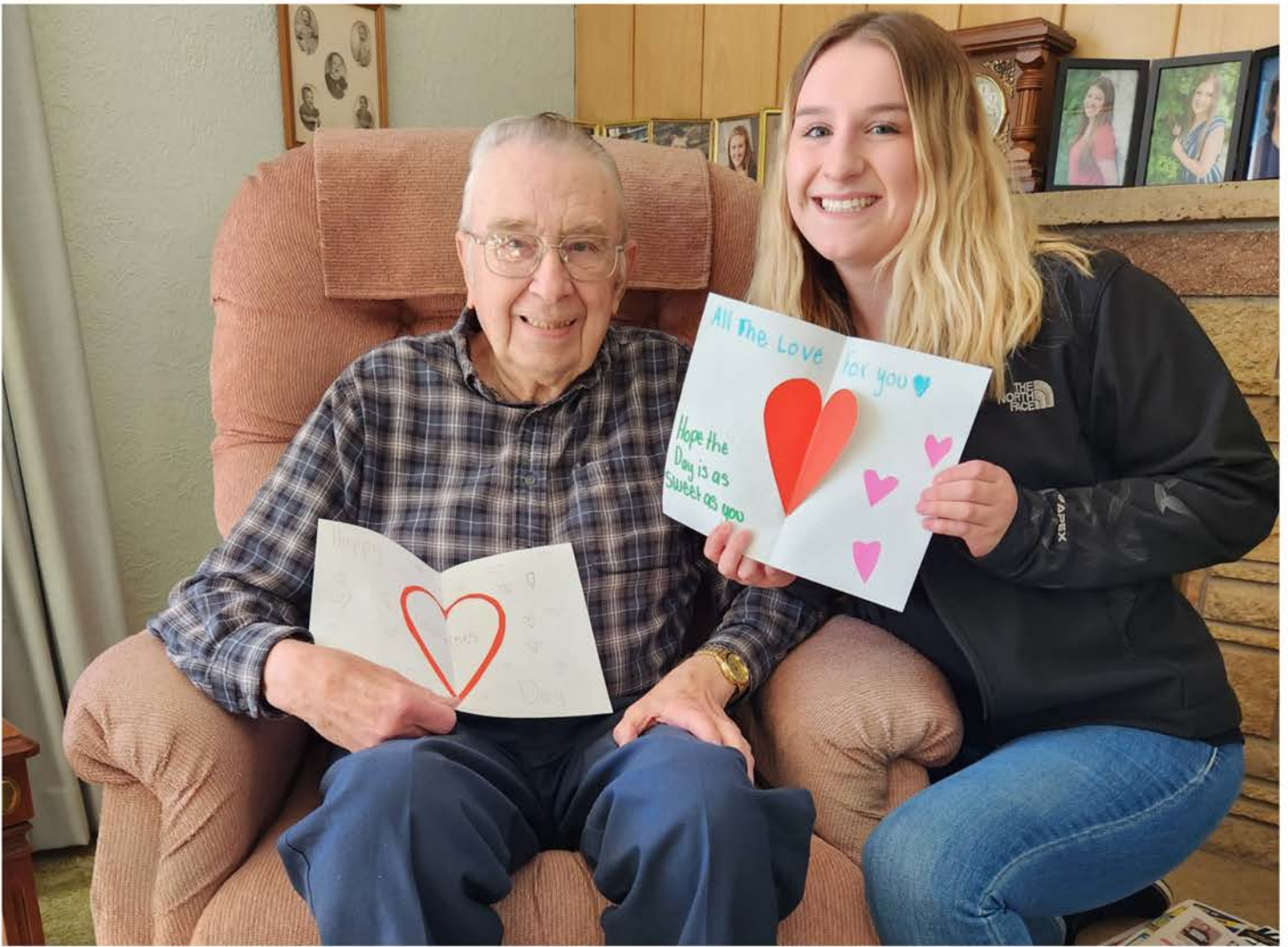
- The MN Food Helpline 888-711-1151
- <https://www.hungersolutions.org/find-help/>
- Channel One Food Bank - NAPS Program 507-287-2350
- Channel One Food Shelf 507-424-1707
- Minnesotahelp.info - Search Food Shelf or Food Distribution Options
- Home Delivered Meals or Senior Dining in your area, call the Senior LinkAge Line at **800-333-2433**







Top: EN ED Kathy Scheid and WSU intern Matt at a Community Connect event - bringing awareness to those facing homelessness.
Middle: Ron Strong, Companion and Group Facilitator with respite clients "Dynamic Dudes."
Bottom: December 2022 Olmsted County Memory Café .



NEIGHBORS IN ACTION

Top: NIA Valentine celebrations
Bottom: Jack and volunteer Matt play cribbage.



Top: NIA staff Abby assists client, Barb, with meal/drink
Bottom: Happy clients with vacuums purchased using CARES Act Grant funding.



**NEIGHBORS
IN ACTION**

Participants enjoy Mower County Seniors' Memory Cafe





Left: Family Service Rochester volunteers doing fall clean up.
Top right: Music Monday at the Memory Café in Albert Lea.
Bottom right: Albert Lea Memory Café participants enjoy crafts and other activities.



Outgoing Board Chair

I am pleased to pass the torch to incoming Board Chair, Jean Eaton.

It was a pleasure to be involved with Executive Committee Work for SEMAAA. I will continue serving on the Board and promoting programs funded through SEMAAA grants for people with dementia and their caregivers in Mower County

Jenelle Cummings

Thank you, Jenelle!

Incoming Board Chair

Jean Eaton has spent her career in the education, business, tourism and the nonprofit world. At Riverland Community College Jean served as the Campus/Customized Training Dean and was a former Sales, Marketing & Fashion Instructor. She was the Executive Director of the Albert Lea Convention & Visitors Bureau, Executive Director of the Freeborn County United Way, Director of the Albert Lea Greater Education Project and Mayor of Albert Lea. Jean owned Eaton Image Development and Co-Owns Granicrete MN with her husband. She was a finalist for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Presidential invitation and Congressional Delegate to the First White House Conference on Tourism, Governor's appointment to the Governor's Workforce Council, President of the SE MN Workforce Council and served on the SE MN Initiative Foundation board. She is currently a trustee for the Albert Lea Healthcare Coalition and volunteers with various organizations.



"I have always had a heart for older adults. When asked to be part of SEMAAA, I didn't hesitate at the chance to make a difference in so many lives with the work that we do."

- Jean Eaton

Since joining SEMAAA, Jean has gotten involved through memory kits, Memory Cafes, Tech Tuesday & Music Monday at the Memory Cafe, the Strategic Planning as Marketing Chair, Age Friendly Designation, and through speaking engagements to local groups.

11

Counties

12

Board Members

88,000+

Aging Population
(approx *)

Endless

Cups of Coffee

RETURN TO COMMUNITY RECAP 2022

Like for many others, 2022 was a year of continued transition into the reality of our new normal, the aftermath of a Pandemic. For the Return to Community Team of Senior LinkAge Line®, this meant working hard to assist individuals and caregivers during times of skyrocketing costs, staff shortages in long term care and home health, scarce support services in our rural areas, extended hospital stays and a lack of nursing home bed availability in our region. These barriers often left families frustrated, overwhelmed, confused and unsure of what happens next.

While the Return to Community service has been around since 2010, we continued to grow, evolve and shift to meet the needs of those we aim to serve. While our goal continues to be to help older adults remain in their homes or return to their home from a facility, **HOW** we were able to do that expanded.

During 2022, we continued with a hybrid approach to connect with individuals and caregivers, through phone-based assistance, the use of technology through Zoom or other virtual formats, chat and in-person work. Slowly but surely staff were able to increase the level of in-person work through home visits in the community as well as nursing home visits. Although we always strive to establish ongoing follow up with individuals to support long term success in the community, in 2022 we also began providing temporary assistance or even one-time assistance to those in need.

445 individuals signed on for ongoing follow along services while another 96 accessed temporary or one-time assistance. Staff also provided education and resources to an additional 395 individuals and provided support and information to 201 individuals who made the decision for long term placement in a skilled nursing facility.

In 2022, we also saw an increase in the use of the online referral form (www.slreferral.org) which brought 492 referrals to the Return to Community Team. Referrals came from individuals themselves, caregivers, nursing homes, hospitals, home health agencies and the Senior LinkAge Line. Community Living Specialists Chris Johnson, Emily Krowiorz, Jay Hall, Sara Kohrs and Supervisor, Lori Wacek, make up the small, but mighty Return to Community Team.



2022 RTC
At a Glance

445

Individuals
signed on

395

Received
Resources &
Education

201

Support to
individuals in
LTC placement

96

Accessed
Temporary
Services

492

Referrals Made
to RTC Team

Making a Difference

Volume 1, Issue: Annual Report

Year: 2022. Impact: Endless

Assisted an individual to apply for Medicare Savings programs; was eligible but not receiving benefits until RTC staff provided help.

Client – *“I appreciate your time that you spend with me. Always gives me a lift when you call. I have friends that I can go out with and do things, but it’s not the same as you.”*

Helped a caregiver bring a family member to MN from Kentucky for end-of-life care. Provided resources, helped navigate County forms & programs and assisted to secure an assisted living apartment.

Caregiver - *“Thank you - you are amazing!”*

Client – *“You’ve played a big role for me today! When I was introduced to SLL and you, I never thought too much about it – that it would be anything to really help me, BUT in your case, it’s been a help to me all along the way. It’s been terrific. Like today, it’s like you just knew to call me. It’s always great talking to you.”*

Client discharged home from the nursing home with no services, as the social worker was not able to find in-home therapy in his rural area. RTC staff coordinated outpatient therapy instead, obtained orders, confirmed billing costs, and arranged transportation to & from.

Connected a client in the nursing home with Southern MN Regional Legal Services for help working through a complex Medical Assistance issue.

Provider/Social Worker – *“You have been such an amazing resource for me and all the residents here at the nursing home. You’re a reliable person who always follows through when we have questions or need help. Even when you’re not the person to touch base with, I can count on you to point me in the right direction and to do it with a positive attitude!”*

2022



SEMAAA
Staff
in action

SEMAAA Board

Jean Eaton, *Chair - Freeborn County*
Dave Vandergon, *Vice Chair - Goodhue County*
Marie Hlava, *Treasurer - At Large*
Mike Hancock, *Secretary - Olmsted County*
David Beimers - *Rice County*
Maggie Cook - *At Large*
Jenelle Cummings - *Mower County*
Rita Fox - *Wabasha County*
Marjorie Fuller - *Fillmore County*
Karen Hanson - *Winona County*
Dwight Jennings - *At Large*
Valerie Knutson - *Steele County*

SEMAAA Staff

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

