



TRELLIS™

2021

YEAR IN REVIEW

2021: Year in Review

Trellis delivered remarkable outcomes in 2021 – despite challenges related to COVID-19. This summary touches on key highlights.

Thank you to our tremendous staff for their work this year in furthering our mission to help people optimize well-being as they age.

Rebranding

In March 2021, we took a new name and a new brand: Trellis.

Trellis is an umbrella brand. Both legal entities, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging, and its wholly owned nonprofit subsidiary, Innovations for Aging, do business as "Trellis."

The new brand better represents the breadth and depth of our work and has been well-received by staff and in the community.



Program Accomplishments

Older Americans Act Administration

Our Older Americans Act program focused on distributing funds to the community as quickly as possible as the COVID-19 pandemic continued and people faced pronounced needs. More than 50% of the individuals served were people of color. In 2021, we also tracked the number of individuals waiting for services. Growing waitlists highlight the need for new investments in services for older adults in Minnesota.

Trellis issued a revised Title III funding RFP in July 2021, incorporating recommendations from our “Equity Assessment of Access to Title III Funding” completed earlier in the year.

The RFP process included an extensive outreach effort to organizations that provide services to BIPOC and people with low incomes. The OAA team also offered technical support throughout the application process. The team received 49 applications (a record number) requesting \$5,893,828 million in funding. We awarded the \$2 million in available funding to 30 community-based organizations.

* These numbers are preliminary estimates. The number of people served may count people who received multiple services more than once.



Trellis produced videos with three of our Title III providers to communicate the value of their work with older adults. Here Joy Rivera with the Division of Indian Works tells their story.

In 2021, we distributed **\$13.1 million**, serving **32,773***

Senior LinkAge Line Services

One of the big changes for Senior LinkAge Line® teams in 2021 was transitioning to a new **client tracking system** launched by the state SLL team. Several Trellis staff were early adopter “champions” for the system and contributed to a successful statewide launch in September. The new system has fewer required fields and more tools for filtering and sorting, allowing staff to focus their time on listening to and interacting with the person they are assisting.



Volunteers and Outreach

- **On-boarded 22 new volunteers** in 2021, ten of whom speak more than one language. The volunteers are helping us open doors with older adults who have not had easy access to Trellis or the Senior LinkAge Line previously.
- **In all, 77 volunteers contributed 3,818 hours** in 2021 with an estimated value of \$108,966.
- For the first time, the Outreach Team offered **Senior LinkAge Line presentations in languages** other than English – Somali, Spanish, Hmong, Oromo and Vietnamese.
- The Outreach Team **made 142 presentations with 8,211 participants** (6,200 were in a congressional town hall).
- Outreach staff and volunteers **conducted 24 media interviews** in 2021, forming new relationships with KFAI, La Jefe Radio, WCCO Radio and Univision. The interviews were conducted primarily in English, but staff also presented in Hmong, Spanish and Somali.



Mai is a volunteer ambassador for Trellis. She is one of 13 individuals who have been recruited in that role by the Volunteer and Outreach Team.



Benefits and Options

Benefits and Options Team members at Trellis answer Senior LinkAge Line calls and are on the front lines of helping older adults and caregivers find resources and answers to their questions.

During 2021, many callers were stressed and had increased levels of need, putting additional demands on our team members.

Trellis SLL team members **assisted 33,609 callers** during 2021, including 5,810 during Medicare Open Enrollment.

Preadmission Screening

- **Completed 31,273 screening** in 2021 and made 2,537 follow-up calls to older adults.
- **Presented to 145 hospital discharge planners, nursing home social workers, managed care and county case managers** across the state to raise awareness about the preadmission screening process.
- **Conducted outreach activities with 24 hospitals and 135 skilled nursing facilities** in the seven-county metro region.
- **Referred 1,833 caregivers** for in-person follow-up.

Preadmission Screening celebrated its seven-year anniversary and the milestone of **250,000 preadmission screens** processed by the Trellis team.

Return to Community

- **Managed 4,559 client referrals** in 2021. We provided education and consultation to those who answered calls (65%) and signed up 464 clients for full “follow along” services. Community living specialists supported those individuals as they returned to the community from a skilled nursing facility or remained in the community with a support plan in place. Specialists made 826 check-in calls.
- **On-boarded four new community living specialists.** The team also developed “peer support partners” for seasoned staff to partner with newer staff for support while working 100% virtually.
- **Resumed in-person assistance.** In summer 2021, Return to Community started to again provide limited in-person assistance, with visits in homes and skilled nursing facilities. We did 34 in-person visits with people with the most complex needs and who benefited from face-to-face service.

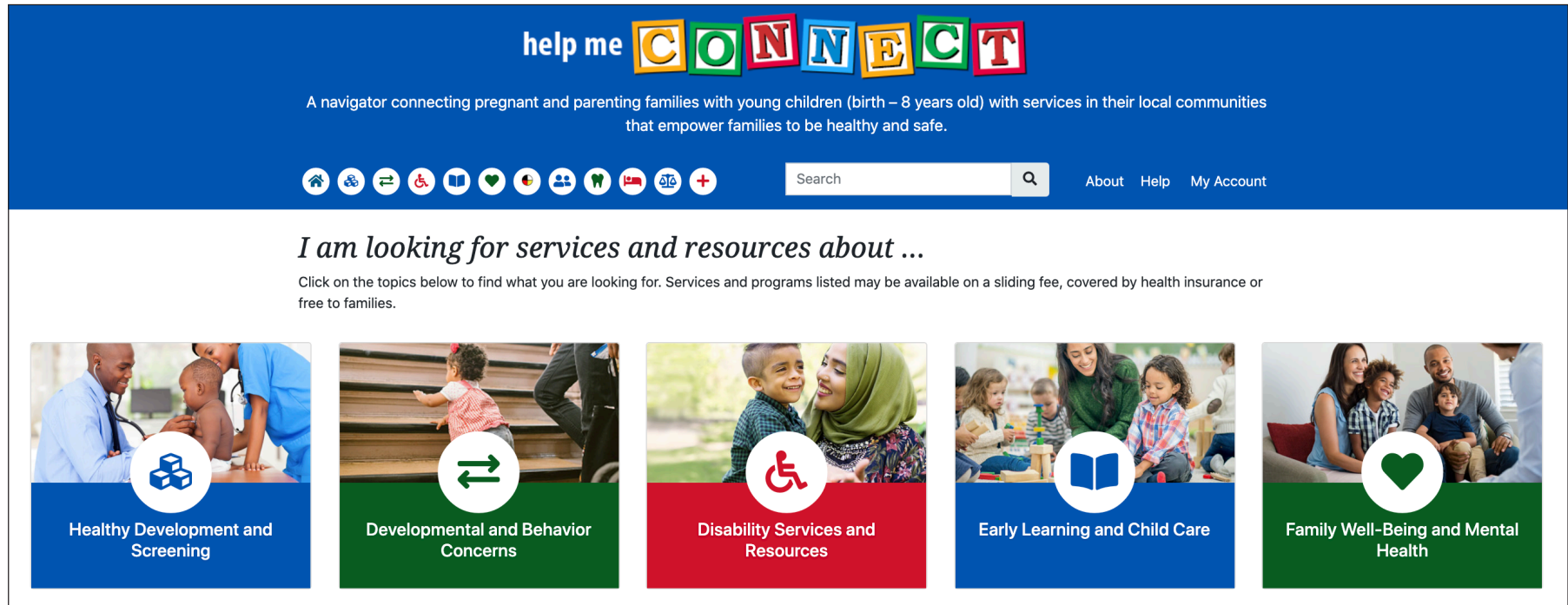


Data Management Program

- **Added assisted living licensing listings.** The Data Management Program worked closely with the state Senior LinkAge Line team and the Minnesota Department of Health to have updated information available on MinnesotaHelp.info when new assisted living licenses went into effect in August. This required removing 2,558 registered housing with services listings, adding 1,964 new assisted living licensed listings and reviewing 932 home care licenses. The work was completed on August 11.

MinnesotaHelp.info lists
10,874 agencies with more than
64,500 points of service.
Each listing is reviewed at least once
each year. Before a listing is made
public, it undergoes 40 quality checks.

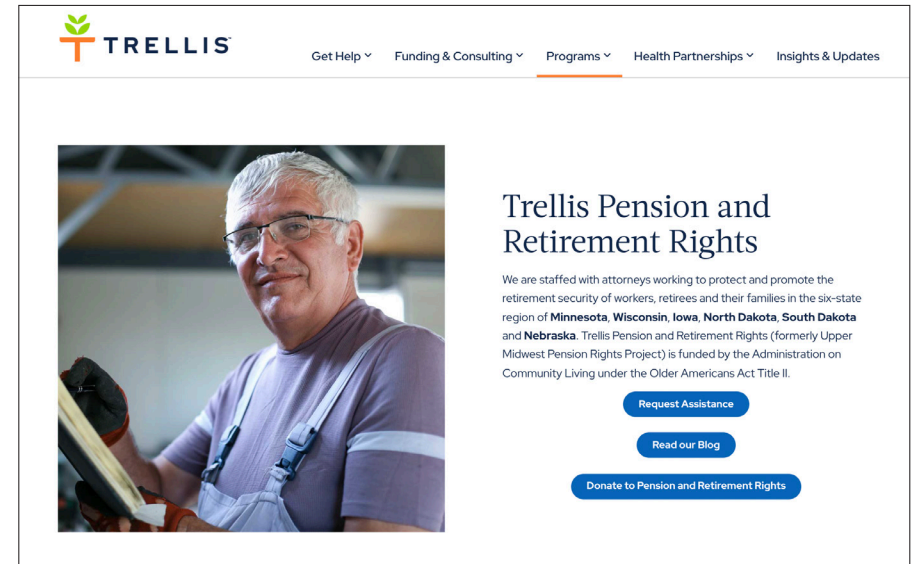
- **Secured a new contract to provide data management for “[Help Me Connect](#)”** an interagency collaboration between Minnesota’s Departments of Education, Health and Human Services that provides access to services for families with young children. The project required a new data architecture to display separate data for MinnesotaHelp.info and Help Me Connect.



- **Improved Processes.** In 2021, we did a complete overhaul of the systems for programmatically reviewing entries in our database. With this new system, 75% of our entries can be kept up to date programmatically. The system flags entries that need the attention of a data management specialist. An amazing amount of complex logic was integrated in the system, which in turn impacted processes outside of this work and allowed for additional DMP process improvement.

Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights

- **Served 179 new clients in 2021** – the most new clients Pension Rights has served in any year since 2013.
- **Connected with more than 400 community organizations throughout the year.** In partnership with Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, the Minnesota Bar Association, and Iowa Legal Aid, led virtual education events that were attended by more than 250 individuals. These events continue to lead to new client referrals.
- **Grew its online presence.** Online searches are now the most common way for new clients to learn about Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights. With a redesigned online intake form, more than 20% of new clients come to us through the website.



ElderCare Development Partnership

Diane Graham-Raff, ElderCare Development Partnership coordinator, organized **43 vaccine clinics in community settings, serving 11,300 people.** This work was made possible because Diane and our EDP team have been cultivating relationships in the community for many years. The clinics took place in locations focused on communities of color and likely saved the lives of thousands of older adults who would have otherwise had difficulty finding and receiving a vaccine.

Dementia Friendly Initiatives

- **Dementia Friendly @ Work for Healthcare.** The ACT on Alzheimer's team developed training materials and an infrastructure for helping dental practices and medical clinics be more dementia friendly. A free 60- or 90-minute training is provided by ACT-trained volunteers. Dental and medical offices that would like the free training can request it using an online form. A more in-depth, video-based clinical training for dental providers is being developed in partnership with the Minnesota Northstar Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (MN-GWEP).
- **Dementia Friends Minnesota** developed a leadership structure during 2021 that will help to create sustainability for the volunteer-led program. The team created materials and procedures for training master trainers who train Dementia Friends champions and lead trainers who train master trainers. The system is supported with online registration and certification tools found on the Dementia Friends Minnesota website.
- **Becoming Dementia Friendly: 2021 Community Summit.** The virtual Summit held on October 7 had 200+ participants. Five communities created videos highlighting their dementia friendly work. "Water cooler" discussions were led by leaders from across the state. The ACT Team also announced a new Dementia Friendly Community of Learning at the Summit. The Community of Learning will meet once a month starting in January 2022.
- **The Remember Project** engaged 2,068 participants in online and in-person performances that engaged audiences in reducing the stigma of memory loss.

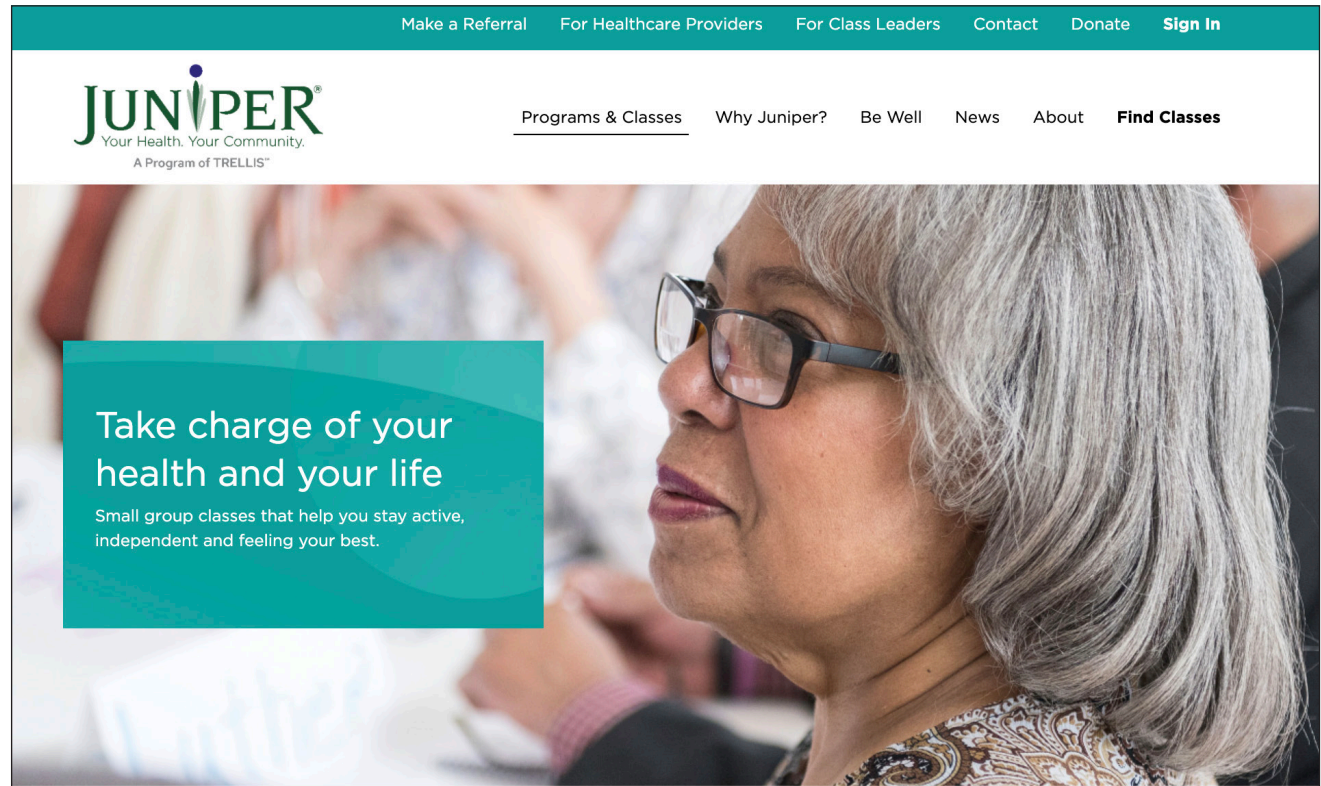


UNIVERSITY
OF MINNESOTA
Driven to Discover®



Juniper

- **Launched a new website.** The updated Juniper® website at yourjuniper.org is more user-friendly, including video testimonials of participants and class leaders.
- **Added three community health workers.** The CHWs are integrated into community settings to help individuals navigate resources for health and social care. Locations include Presbyterian Homes of Bloomington, Sanford Health in Worthington, and HealthPartners Neuroscience Center in Saint Paul.



- **Engaged approximately 3,300 Minnesotans in Juniper classes.** These classes helped people get fit, manage their health and prevent falls and connect with others in their community and across the state.
- **Raised \$2.4 million in federal and private foundation grants** to support Juniper programs, fund revisions to yourjuniper.org and support community-based providers across Minnesota who offer Juniper classes.
- **Signed two additional health plan contracts**, bringing the total number of contracts to four. This achievement allows Trellis to bring Juniper programming to approximately 27,000 Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) members who receive managed care from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, HealthPartners, UCare and Itasca Medical Care (IMCare). These agreements double the number of people who receive Juniper classes as a benefit from their health plan.

Staff, Board and Structure

Trellis made several staff, board and structure changes in 2021, most notably:

- **Created the role of Vice President of Operations and Equity** and hired John Doan to fill the position. Aligned with this change, we eliminated the divisional structure within Trellis to pave the way for closer collaboration among all our teams. Mark Cullen's role and title changed to VP of Strategy and Business Development and Julie Roles's title changed to VP of Communications and Advocacy.
- **Liz Hagstrom added manager of Return to Community to her existing Preadmission Screening manager role.**
- **Launched a cross-functional resource development team** to build momentum for a greater philanthropic presence at Trellis.

New Board Members



Ram Rajagopalan
Medical Device Industry
Solution Head at Virtusa



Sumeet Lee
Community Partnership Lead,
Livio Health, Stella Care



Tim Busse
Mayor of Bloomington



Barbara Champlin
Clinical Associate Professor,
University of Minnesota

Introducing John Doan



Trellis is please to welcome
John Doan as our new
**Vice President of Operations
and Equity.**

John brings a wealth of experience
in the nonprofit, for-profit and
governmental sectors, and we
look forward to his leadership
in our organization and in
the community.



TRELLIS

trellisconnects.org

Trellis Welcomed 18 New Employees in 2021



Abdi Ahmed
Community Outreach
Specialist



Maby Almiron
Community Outreach
Specialist



Tim Collins
Technical Support
Specialist



John Doan
Vice President of
Operations & Equity



Hannah Egan
Community Living
Specialist



Beth Falk
Community Living
Specialist



Angela Fields
Community Health
Worker



Eric Hanson
Community Living
Specialist



Erin Haugen
Sr. Wellness
Engagement Specialist



Xiong Lee
ElderCare Development
Partnership Coordinator



Melissa Mercedes
Office Manager



Lauren Peterson
Provider Relations &
Experience Manager



MJ Ryan
Benefits & Options
Specialist



Jacob Smith
Data Management
Specialist



Sarah Tithof
Older Americans Act
Grant Manager



Madelyn Voigt
Community Living
Specialist.



Kazoua Yang
Benefits and Options
Specialist



Mayla Yang
Community Outreach
Specialist

Administrative

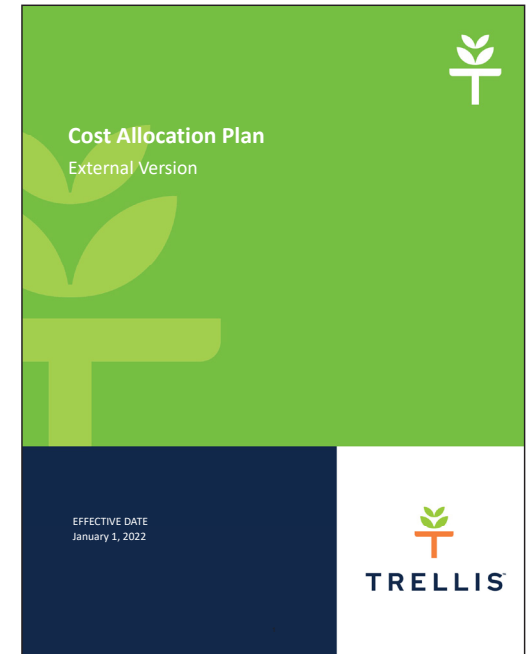


Employee Inclusion Survey

Trellis completed its first Employee Inclusion Survey in 2021 and is beginning the process of sharing results and creating action plans based on the input.

Information Security Assessment

Trellis completed its most comprehensive security assessment to date in 2021. We scored higher than average for similar organizations in the healthcare and social assistance industries.



New Cost Allocation Plan

The Finance Team developed a new cost allocation plan, sharing costs for core operations across the organization. The new plan provides an equitable distribution of costs and reduces administrative burden.

Equity

Trellis is committed to becoming an equitable organization and to making the changes needed in both our internal and external activities to achieve that goal. These are some of the actions we took in 2021.

- Partnered with SDK Communications + Consulting to conduct a [equity assessment of access to our Older Americans Act Title III](#) funding. The study recommendations have become the north star for changes in our approach to funding, with more changes yet to come.
- Created a [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Roadmap](#) to guide our work in developing staff and board capacity, aligning communications with DEI goals, increasing diversity in staff and board and making changes in our external operations.



Trellis purchased a collection of photos from documentary photographer, Walter Griffin, for permanent display in our breakroom. Walter's focus is depicting positive images of Black life.



Louise Aronson, a practicing geriatrician and Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco and author of the book *Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine, and Reimagining Life*, spoke to Trellis staff in June. The topic was ageism and its impact on the health and well-being of older adults.

Recognitions and Connections



Trellis was nominated for a Latino Business Award as a result of the Outreach Team's work in the Spanish speaking community.



Senator Amy Klobuchar joined Trellis staff and board members in our courtyard in October to help raise awareness for the need to control raising healthcare costs for older adults.



Dawn Simonson was a key leader in the Volunteer Drivers Coalition's successful efforts to get legislation passed in the 2021 session.



Dawn was also named in Minnesota's 100 Most Influential Health Care Leaders by Minnesota Physician.

Dawn Simonson received the **Ann K. Johnson Community Health Spirit**

award from the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation.

The award included a \$2,500 donation to Trellis.