

2025
COMMUNITY
BENEFIT
REPORT

Aging

Forward



DIRECTION HOME

AKRON CANTON AREA AGENCY ON AGING & DISABILITIES

OPTIMIZING AGING

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN



Abigail Morgan
PRESIDENT & CEO



Dr. David B. Reynolds
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

2025 was a year of purposeful evolution for Direction Home Akron Canton.

As our region's aging landscape grows more complex, we strengthened our commitment to optimizing aging through our in-home assessment, waiver service coordination and care management, advocacy and rights protection, and provider network management. These core competencies allow us to provide trusted access to home and community-based services, such as meals and personal care, as well as nurture and grow community partnerships. Our strategic focus aligns with our mission—reinforcing core competencies while preparing for a future defined by innovation and increasing opportunities for community support. We enter 2026 with strong momentum, grounded in a universal belief: our skillsets and experience remain the irreplaceable core of successful aging.

We provide access, guidance and a tailored experience to the tens of thousands of individuals who enter our “front door,” the Aging and Disability Resource Center. Then, by providing care management across Medicaid waiver and Older Americans Act programs, we continue to deliver trusted, person-centered coordination that ensures older adults and people with disabilities can thrive in the place they want to call home.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Access to meaningful, person-centered services remains one of the most urgent community challenges. In 2025, Direction Home served as the central hub for identifying needs, assessment, and coordination across Summit, Stark, Portage, and Wayne counties through our Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). We received 31,607 referrals to the ADRC and completed 6,282 assessments in the community. We exceeded 8,000 members across various programming in 2025, and had 16,538 contacts in Elder Rights. These roles across our Agency allow us

Aging **Forward** Starts With Access

The future of aging is being shaped today—by how we design systems, fund services, and ensure every older adult has a clear path to care, dignity, and choice.

to see the need growing in the 60+ population. A featured consumer story from the Aging in Place (AIP) program highlights the critical difference that assessment, in-home assistance, technology support, and case management can make. As American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding ended and AIP wound down, the needs of older adults did not decrease—highlighting gaps for non-Medicaid populations.

We experienced an increased demand for services: waiting lists grew, calls increased, and assessments reached new highs. All of this was in part due to the loss of over \$7 million in extra COVID-era funding that provided 430,000+ meals to 4,500+ recipients. The loss of these funds resulted in reduced meals and personal care hours for many community members.

Still, 2025 saw significant achievements: MyCare Ohio transitioned to its new form, Next Generation MyCare under a Duals Special Need Plan, requiring new roles and processes developed by our clinical leadership.

Our management of the statewide care transitions contract with Medical Mutual of Ohio (MMO) continues to decrease readmissions through successful member engagement as the trusted local area agency on aging. Our advocacy assisted with an increase to the personal needs allowance for nursing home residents, the first in nearly 20 years.

Looking ahead, our advocacy and need for sustainable funding remains essential to endeavor that no older adult falls through the gaps in care. We continue to see more older adults go without the in-home services they need like home-delivered meals, personal care, and emergency communication systems because they lack the funds to pay out of pocket but do not qualify for public programs such as Medicaid. We need to find sustainable funding for these individuals if everyone is going to have the choices they need to age in place.

Aging **Forward** Means No One Navigates Aging Alone

How Direction Home helped John and AnneMarie find clarity, care, and options in a complex system.

John, a retired law enforcement officer and recipient of services through temporary COVID-era relief funding, has a natural love of people and caring for others. However, he admits that he didn't always have an idea of what his own care would look like as an older adult. John is not alone as many community members don't plan ahead or know what resources are available until they are in active need. With increasing prices and increasing personal needs, John and his wife AnneMarie faced difficult decisions over the years while balancing important needs like

food and medication. John and AnneMarie relied heavily on the support of friends and family, but also relied on Direction Home to navigate their options and access services.

“I was born and raised to take care of myself, and I learned early on as a [parent] that sometimes you have to ask for help and it's not a bad thing.” Area Agencies on Aging are a wonderful resource for families like John and AnneMarie, but reliable funding sources are always the catalyst for finding relief while navigating long-term care decisions.



Scan QR code to watch a PBS Western Reserve video, featuring John Boykin.

“Sometimes you have to ask for help—and it's not a bad thing.”



Aging **Forward** Through Smarter Systems

Modern tools, stronger partnerships, and data-driven care coordination for a changing aging landscape.

We have been working to address several challenges individuals are facing in our community including housing issues and access to food. We have new partnerships with local Habitat for Humanity offices that allow for better referrals and link individuals to multiple funding sources that best align with their needs and situation. We are exploring different ways to engage with the housing community, investing in new partnerships to further our expertise to provide real choices for those in danger of being homeless.

In 2026, our focus shifts to expanding process innovation, addressing housing needs, and deepening partnerships that strengthen the continuum of care. There are significant funding needs for innovative ideas, and our Foundation is committed to this innovative spirit that will allow us to identify evolving trends and preferences in the new aging landscape.

Innovation only matters if it improves real lives.



Aging **Forward** Requires Strong Foundations

Investing in people, systems, and infrastructure to sustain long-term impact.

To sustain long-term impact, Direction Home invested in organizational capacity in 2025. Internal evaluations and infrastructure upgrades positioned the agency for future growth.

Key improvements included a new server and IT modernization, a review of analytics for enhanced provider network development, a comprehensive organizational assessment, and an automation study identifying \$319K in potential annual savings.

We continue to examine opportunities for talent development and have certified our first Community Health Worker. We have also remained committed to our leadership development with a curriculum

designed to give our leadership the tools needed to navigate the changing environment. Finally, we have funded the expansion of grant-writing functions that have allowed us to build better methods for identifying, applying and managing grants that align with our strategic goals. Our next steps include continued structural and technological investment, including website modernization and automation implementation.

Challenges remain, particularly around the identification of needs and program offerings for those newly entering the 60+ landscape. We need to continue to identify the trends in aging supports so we can accurately predict what the next generation of older adults will desire in their later life. We are excited to think about this future and create the later life options we want to have as we age.



Strong
systems
create
stronger
outcomes.

MISSION MOMENTS

Our Mission Moments of 2025 continue to work towards fulfilling our mission— provide older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers long-term care choices and consumer protection so they can achieve the highest quality of life. Scan QR Codes to watch videos!



Bringing Aging Forward to the Spotlight

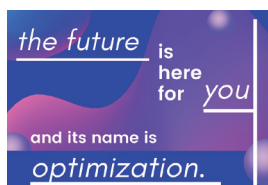
A feature from PBS Western Reserve propelled Direction Home into the spotlight with stories from members and advice from leadership about asking for help and aging at home.



Aging Optimized Through Resource Creation and Innovation

Direction Home Akron Canton Foundation announced a new vision and mission leading into its annual raffle campaign season. The new direction allows focus in three areas: **ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES** to improve access to essential community services for underserved populations, **INNOVATION** for funding fostering partnerships, entrepreneurship and returns on **INVESTMENT** while creating innovative solutions that optimize aging, and investment in the Direction

Home Agency as a leader for aging network professionals to provide the best quality of care.



Joy at Every Age.

Direction Home hosted its first annual Senior Prom in June 2025. Thanks to Aging is an Art Form sponsorship funding, over 100 older adults gathered to dance the night away with food, music, photos, art activities, and friends and family.



Honoring Those Who Move Aging Forward

Direction Home hosted a refined Awards Ceremony in December 2025, taking on an elevated red carpet theme honoring outstanding local older adults, home health aides, volunteers, scholars, and professionals. The event held record attendance and praise with inspiring stories from awardees.



Advocating for What Sustains Independence

2025 was a record year for advocacy efforts, largely focused on the expiration of temporary and one-time funding (ARPA and other COVID-era grants). Direction Home partnered with several nutrition providers to fundraise and increase awareness of the growing need for critical services such as home-delivered meals. Taking a two-step approach to advocacy, messaging focused not only on the necessary nutrition, but also on the social impact home-delivered meals can have for vulnerable populations.



DIRECTION HOME FOUNDATION

The Direction Home Akron Canton Foundation announced a new mission and vision that better adapts to the changing needs of older adults after 26 years of a primary advocacy-driven focus for older adults in Portage, Stark, Summit, and Wayne Counties.

The Foundation's new vision will be **aging optimized through resource creation and innovation**. Supported by the new mission: "Direction Home Foundation supports optimized aging for our families and neighbors to enjoy life how they want to experience it. We do this by increasing access to community-based care across all ages and abilities, raising awareness and funds to invest in innovation so that the future is bright across the lifespan."

The vision and mission will steer the Foundation in three focus areas:

ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Focus on improving access to essential community services for underserved populations.

INNOVATION:

Funding that fosters partnerships, entrepreneurship and returns on investment while creating innovative solutions that optimize aging.

INVESTMENT IN THE AGENCY:

Investment in Direction Home as a leader for aging network professionals to provide the best quality of care.

Being innovative as a Foundation means rethinking traditional approaches and embracing creativity to address pressing individual and societal challenges. The new focus of the Foundation will help grant space for exploring endeavors that shape a future-focused direction for older adults to age well in the ways they choose.

Thank you, Charles and Fran!

We also want to honor and recognize the service of two long-standing Board members. First, Charles Greene recently retired from the Direction Home Agency Board after 27 years of service. Second, late Board Vice Chair Fran Rice dedicated 25 years to the Direction Home Agency and Foundation Boards before her passing in January 2026.

Both members have provided many years of guidance and support to Direction Home, as well as significant community impact during their careers and retirement. Thank you, Charles and Fran, for all you have done for Direction Home.

2025 FOUNDATION CAMPAIGN

Thank you to all of our purchasers, donors, sponsors, and supporters of the Direction Home Akron Canton Foundation Raffle this year.

We've exceeded our goal, raising \$195,308+!

2025 Top Donors:

Northeast Professional Caregivers	Joseph L. Ruby Dr. David Reynolds
Babcox Media	Alert Medical Alarms
Simply EZ	Purpose Care
Medical Mutual	TTx Inc.

2025 Raffle Winners:

GRAND PRIZE
Teresa Atkinson

FIRST PRIZE
Chuck Calalesina

SECOND PRIZE
Samuel Edmunds

THIRD PRIZE
Chris Butts

FOURTH & FIFTH PRIZE
Barbara VonGunten
Samuel Edmunds

SIXTH - NINTH PRIZE
Kim Walko
Tony Italia
Theresa Niewiadomski



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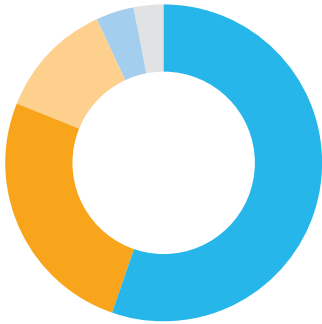
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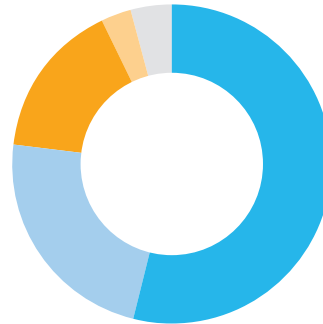
Consolidated Statements Of Financial Position

FY2025



TOTAL REVENUES BY SOURCE
\$101,778,470

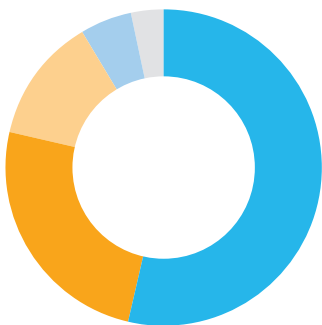
- 55% Medicaid
- 26% Non-government Revenue
- 12% Older Americans Act & Other Federal
- 4% State and Local
- 3% Other Revenue



TOTAL EXPENDITURES
\$97,439,196

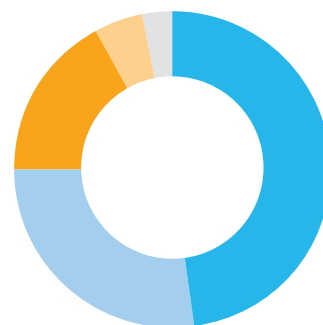
- 54% Care Management Services
- 23% Care Management
- 16% Information Assistance & Community Engagement
- 3% Elder Rights
- 4% Allocation to Community Agencies

FY2024



TOTAL REVENUES BY SOURCE
\$82,275,731

- 53% Medicaid
- 28% Non-government Revenue
- 10% Older Americans Act & Other Federal
- 4% State and Local
- 5% Other Revenue



TOTAL EXPENDITURES
\$78,394,726

- 48% Care Management Services
- 27% Care Management
- 17% Information Assistance & Community Engagement
- 3% Elder Rights
- 5% Allocation to Community Agencies

Our Mission

Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities provides older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers long-term care choices and consumer protection so they can achieve the highest quality of life.

Our Vision

Direction Home Akron Canton will be the central access point and the preferred long-term care management organization for all people with disabilities.



DIRECTION HOME

AKRON CANTON AREA AGENCY ON AGING & DISABILITIES

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