



## From the Director's Desk -

### Short takes: Pandemic, workforce, housing...

Welcome to 2022, as we begin another strange year, folks. My completely uneducated position as a non-epidemiologist is that as 2022 winds down months from now, that COVID and its' variants will--for real, after a nearly 3-year cycle-- loosen their grip on infection rates, hospital capacity, global supply chains, inflation, and our day-to-day lives—including the hassle of navigating distancing & masks.

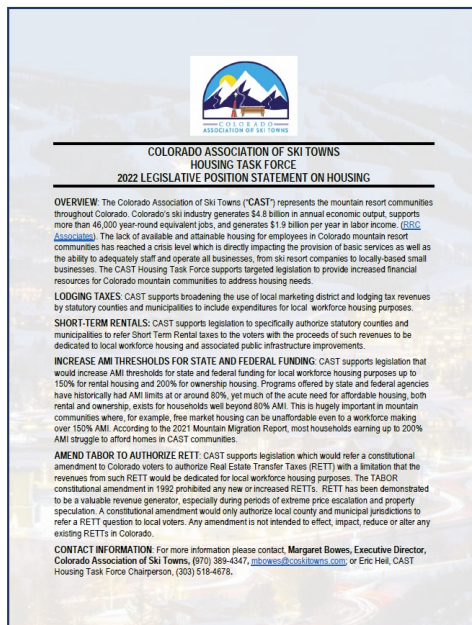
My prediction is that in 2022-2023, Americans will rebound the economy by doing what we do best, spending, playing, travelling with a vengeance, but we will find those experiences dramatically changed because of worker shortages. The [Wall Street Journal](#) also believes there will be a lasting "supply shock" slowing recovery. In *Covid-19, Endemic or Not, Will Still Make us Poorer: More predictable, less deadly virus would continue to exact toll on health and work*, the [WSJ](#) is a bit less sanguine about recovery stating that the long term impact on workers from the disease is that many report "declining satisfaction" with their work.



If you haven't been hearing the drumbeat from these columns, take it from Warren Buffett who says in Inc. Magazine [This is What Will Stop Your Employees from Quitting](#) in which he urges workers to "work in jobs you love," because "you're out of your mind if you keep taking jobs that you don't like because you think it'll look good on your resume." Forget for a moment that a large chunk of American workers work simply to survive and pay the bills in the best job they can find, not padding resumes. His bullet points are music to most worker's ears: 1. Make work Purposeful, 2. Create an environment of shared values, 3. Empower your 'middle managers' to lead, 4. Hire and promote leaders with character. That's it. We're all doing that. Easy peas. Right?

With regard to the ongoing relevance of last year's [Mountain Migration report](#), NWCCOG is proud to share that recommendations from the report drove a Housing Task Force at CAST to support [legislative changes](#), and that at least one Congressional representative is citing the report in proposing policy changes at the national level. More information in these in the January 27<sup>th</sup> Council packet.

This year is shaping up to be a breakout year for many communities with regard to deploying solutions to the housing shortage. These efforts will "move the needle" through this decade, but projects are not financed and built overnight. Even with a burst in the volume of workforce housing units, there is a wide gap between the pay that employers can afford for the many workers they need, and the amount of pay that constitutes a living wage in most NWCCOG communities. Housing is only



one variable to that equation. Conversations with Brianne Snow at FIRC confirm that the volume of community need for food and other aid such as rental assistance has not declined much since the peak of the Pandemic.

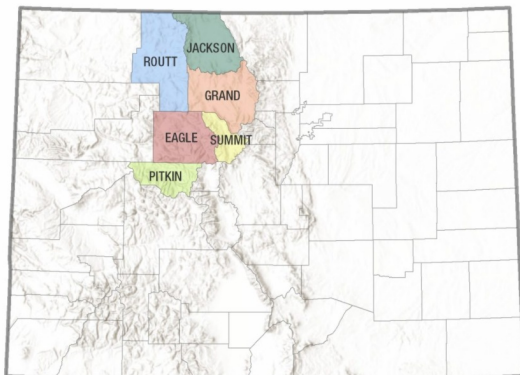
On the housing issue, a couple of macro factors to consider that are not yet apparently impacting high country housing. Governor Newsom signed two bills into law in California, one that overrides single family zoning. SB 9 [allows duplexes to be built in most neighborhoods according to the NYT](#). Property owners in SF zones can build up to 4 units. That is the most radical support of residential density in 50 years. Probably the best exposé on how this could play out in neighborhoods is Conor Dougherty's piece in the NYT Sunday Business section from October 10, [Where the Suburbs End](#) about a San Diego suburb that is becoming a subdivided rental complex as apartments are "delivered on a truck." It's a long read for those who are considering opening up ADUs as a use by right and other pro-density measures that doesn't flinch at how it can impact a neighborhood.

Another macro impact, from Bloomberg News, that is not exactly new is how Silicone Valley and Private Equity with [Wall Street is Using Tech Firms Like Zillow to Eat Up Starter Homes](#), impacting the affordability of housing. Investors accounted for 18% of all home sales in the third quarter of 2021, the highest share since 2000. The article has some interesting counter points in the face of rising rents whether these institutional buyers are really driving rising rental rates or not.

One thing I can for sure say about 2022 is that it will be fascinating from a policy standpoint, and that there will be no shortage of important topics to cover.

**Jon Stavney**  
Executive Director - NWCCOG  
[JStavney@nwccog.org](mailto:JStavney@nwccog.org)

## Gearing Up for 2022



### VINTAGE

While including Routt County into the Vintage family won't be official until July 1, 2022, there is much planning and coordination to be accomplished before then. The inclusion of providing new services in Routt impacts the funding requirements by nearly 25%. With approximately 5800 older adults, additional providers, additional volunteers, and two long term care facilities that fall under the Ombudsman program – it will take considerable planning, organizing, coordination, and communication.. Erin Fisher, Vintage Director, is enthusiastic about the opportunity and said, "We've been meeting with the current

providers in Routt and we're excited to work with them to provide the essential services to older adults and caregivers in the community . (See the latest edition of [Momentum](#) for a compendium of services provided by Vintage and community providers or visit the website [here](#).)

Another exciting opportunity introduced this month is the collaboration with the Energy Program on the new Home Modification initiative piloted in Grand County. The story was unveiled in the December Newsletter. The purpose of the program is to reduce accidents by making the home a safer place to live daily life and age in place and support independent living by making daily activities easier. Once an eligible older adult enters the program, a physical therapist will visit the home and complete a home safety assessment. A copy of the assessment, complete with recommended home modifications and assistive technology, will be given to the client and to Energy/Vintage to make the suggested enhancement. Demand for this type of assistance is high and will take significant amount of expertise and engagement to be successful.

Vintage also is currently seeking proposals from qualified organizations interested in contracting to provide the services to older adults (age 60+) and their caregivers. Older Americans Act (OAA) & State Funds for Senior Services (SFSS) will be awarded to organizations that provide the following services provided, within the Vintage service region of Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Pitkin, Summit and Routt (July

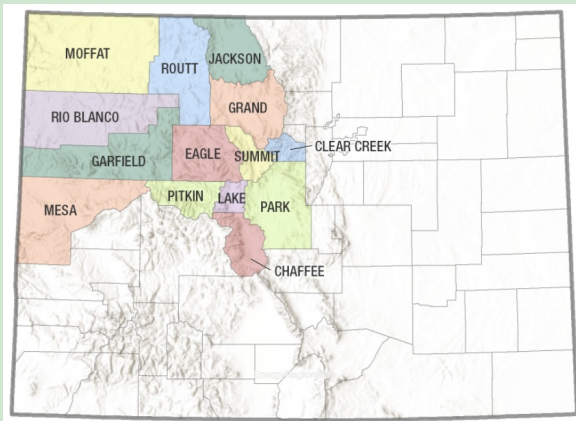


2022) counties for programs from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024, in the following categories:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adult Day Care</li><li>• Case Management</li><li>• Chore</li><li>• Congregate Meals</li><li>• Evidence-based Disease Prevention and Health Promotion</li><li>• Home Delivered Meals</li><li>• Information &amp; Assistance</li><li>• Legal Assistance</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Material Aid Food</li><li>• Nutrition Counseling</li><li>• Nutrition Education</li><li>• Nutrition Consultation</li><li>• Public Information</li><li>• Reassurance</li><li>• Transportation</li><li>• Caregiver Support Groups</li></ul> |
|---|--|

The official Request for Proposal is currently open and will close on February 2, 2022 @ 11:59 pm. For additional information and to access the official RFP, please visit [www.yourvintage.org/for-professionals](http://www.yourvintage.org/for-professionals)

For more information about the project contact Erin Fisher [/efisher@nwccog.org](mailto:efisher@nwccog.org) / 970-455-1067.



## **ENERGY PROGRAM**

After a much-needed holiday break, the Energy Program team is already in full stride. Just noting the topline projects is enough to illustrate the amount of work the team is gearing up for during the coming year.

The Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) which is a Federally funded program that assists individuals and families who are experiencing a heating or cooling related crisis, is in full swing. As outside temperatures dip, having adequate heating in the home becomes even more critical. Doug Jones, Energy Program Director remarked, “ This

program is essential and incredibly challenging due to the wide area of coverage, the numbers of people who need assistance, and staffing – but we’re up to the challenge.”

The Infrastructure Bill recently passed by congress includes funding for Weatherization Assistance Programs across the country. The exact amount NWCCOG will be receiving has not been finalized but it is expected to be quite large enabling the team to impact even more homes in the state and allowing for the hiring of additional staff.

One additional project of note is the introduction of the Home Modification Pilot Program being introduced in Grand County in joint effort with the Energy Program and Vintage which is intended to help older adults and people with disabilities to safely live in their homes longer.

Finally, the entire team is receiving updated Duct and Infiltration Training through the Building Performance Institute and Leadership Training with the Center for Creative Leadership.

For additional information about the program, visit the website [here](#), or contact Doug Jones - [djones@nwccog.org](mailto:djones@nwccog.org)



## **BROADBAND**

With the numerous successes of Broadband and Project THOR in 2021, the work of Nate Walowitz, NWCCOG Regional Broadband Director, has expanded to other Regions in the state. Walowitz remarked, “There is a new dynamic supporting other regions in the state. Some regions prefer virtual support, some prefer face-to-face – as we know from last year’s success there is a huge value in establishing relationships on a face-to-face basis, but it looks like for now we still need to be cognizant of the challenges posed by COVID-19. Its going to be an interesting year learning the new players in the different regions as well

as at DOLA and the Colorado Broadband Office. I’m looking forward to digging in and providing expertise

wherever I am requested.”

There are also some exciting plans for inter-regional broadband network support to expand existing local and state broadband infrastructure investments to expand broadband availability and capability to more regions of the state. Details will be forthcoming late in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of this year.

Spending of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds, totaling in the hundreds of millions of dollars, will need to be prioritized, planned, and readied for application for these grant funds. This will be a multi-year project impacting millions of individuals and businesses.

Walowitz will also be working on creating A Continuity of Operations Plan for the NWCCOG Broadband Program and Project THOR (COOP - as defined in the National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan and the National Security Presidential Directive 51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive 20,) as an effort to ensure that Primary Mission-Essential Functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents and technological or attack-related emergencies.

For questions or additional information go to our website [here](#), or email Nate at [nwalowitz@nwccog.org](mailto:nwalowitz@nwccog.org)

## Bennet’s Housing Affordability Strategy Group Releases Policy Framework to Address Colorado’s Housing Crisis

A recent press release from Senator Bennet's office announced the release of [a framework for housing](#) in Colorado.

The big news for NWCCOG was a note sent from Senator Bennet’s office: “I also wanted you to know how much our office appreciated the high country housing report [Mountain Migration Report] that the COG and CAST commissioned and released last year.... many of the key themes in your report were largely substantiated in our framework. So thanks to you and your organizations. We look forward to continuing to work together to help address workforce housing, child care, as well as general cost of living and related issues in the high country.”

NWCCOG is proud that this report is still generating media attention ([January 2, 2022 Denver Post, article](#)), and is brought up in policy discussions in various jurisdictions, including in Grand County which is considering taking a Housing District question to voters in November.

It is amazing to be thanked for this work and to hear that it has impact at the highest level of national governance.

## Golden Eagle Senior Apartments: Providing Housing for Older Adults since 1986

In partnership with the USDA Rural Development District, Eagle County and NWCCOG EDD the Golden Eagle Senior Apartments has received much-needed improvements over the years. Since 1986 the Golden Eagle has provided 36 units of housing for low-income older adults. Starting in 2009, NWCCOG has helped secure a Housing Preservation Grant to this project and since then grants totaling approximately \$180,000 have resulted in several modifications to the complex.

The most recent grant of \$87,000 funded improvements to the property to enhance the health and safety: constructing a second egress in each unit with sliding glass doors and a patio. This project has been done in phases, with the final phase completed in 2021. NWCCOG has served as the grant administration and fiscal agent for this project.

“We were awarded grant funding to complete multiple projects on property that assist in the safety and wellbeing of our senior community. We’re so grateful to receive these funds and have worked hard this year to improve our property”, Dan Murray, Portfolio Manager, Eagle County Housing & Development Authority.

Eagle County was awarded an “Age Friendly Community” designation by AARP, in part because the county developed an *Aging Well Plan* with a strong vision: **Eagle County older adults age in place with the highest possible quality of life.**

NWCCOG is proud to be a partner in bring improvements to the Golden Eagle Senior Apartments which serves to help fulfill this vision.



*Work being done to provide a second means of ingress and egress by replacing existing windows, with sliding glass doors, and building small patios for each unit. Photo Credit: Jon Stavney*

## **VINTAGE provides assistance during Medicare open enrollment**

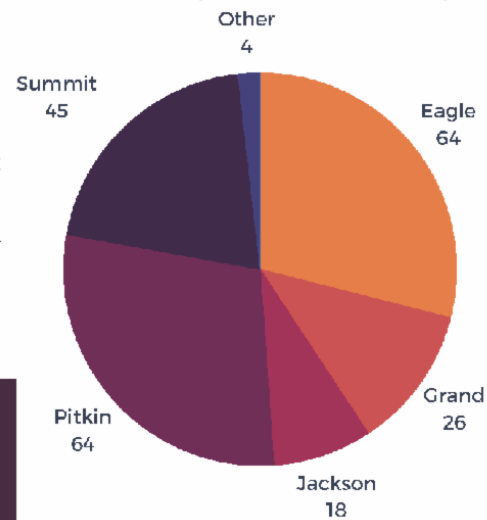
## OVERVIEW OF 2021 MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

We are thrilled to have another Medicare Open Enrollment in the books with a wonderful group of volunteers!

We moved to a hybrid model, assisting people in person and over the phone. Many come to us confused and overwhelmed about Medicare, we are able to alleviate stress, while saving them money. We are committed to making improvements to our Medicare SHIP Program and improving access to Medicare information.

*188 of the 221 beneficiaries helped said they feel more confident in their access to medical care after meeting with a SHIP Counselor*

Clients helped based on county



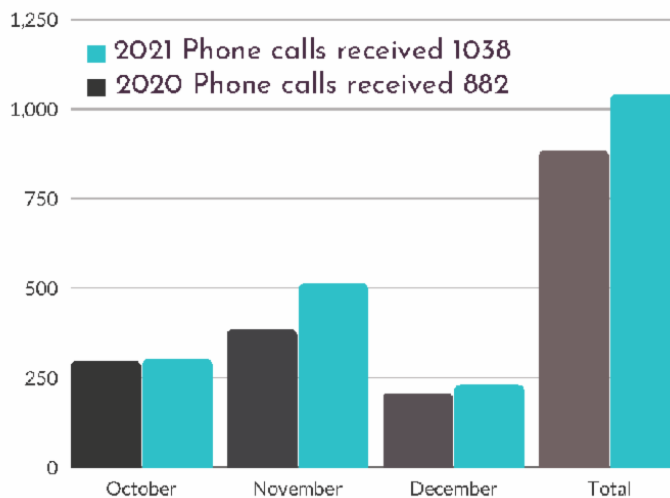
- Beneficiaries helped in 2021 Open Enrollment = 221
- Beneficiaries helped in 2020 Open Enrollment = 160

**We helped 61 more beneficiaries this year**

- 2021 Hours SHIP Counselors Spent Counseling 262
- 2020 Hours SHIP Counselors Spent Counseling 158

**We increased our counseling hours by 104 hours**

## PHONE CALLS



*thank you*

TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS  
FOR THEIR HARD WORK!

Karen Eyrich  
Edward Ozark  
Dyann Gray

Patricia Kravitz  
Edward VanWalraven  
Amy Throm



If you are interested in Volunteering please reach out to [JGlassman@NWCCOG.org](mailto:JGlassman@NWCCOG.org)

### Next Council Meeting - Thursday, January 27, 2022

#### Full Council Meeting, EDD Board & NLF Board Meeting

Location: Zoom Conference Call, On-site location TBD

Time: Council 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM - EDD 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Primary Agenda Items: Annual closed Executive Committee Meeting to review Executive Director performance; elect executive committee & officers; elect CHP representative; annual NLF Board meeting; EDD Board meeting & election of officers; approve Decembers minutes; approve preliminary end of year financials