

MILWAUKEE SENIOR HUBS FOUNDATION

DEDICATED TO THE FULL REALIZATION OF THE MKE HUBS REPORT

JANUARY 21, 2026

A nine-year study initiated by the Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services and culminating in the 2023 MKE HUBS Report released by the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging concluded the following about the Senior Centers currently owned and operated by Milwaukee County

Spaces set aside as senior centers were singularly important places to promote the health and wellbeing of older adults, to advance equity, to address isolation and loneliness through engagement, and to encourage democratization through socialization with neighbors across our many social divides. To do so the County must embrace a future with new partners, welcoming spaces, exciting programming and a willingness to conceive of new public spaces that better serve both existing participants and an entirely new multicultural base of residents.

Unfortunately, current and foreseeable Milwaukee County budgets will be unable to fund nor sustain this noble vision. To facilitate this worthy mission to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations of older adults living in Milwaukee County, the **Milwaukee County Commission on Aging** hereby advocates for the formation of the **MILWAUKEE SENIOR HUBS FOUNDATION** to underpin the **PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP** needed to ensure the survival of the Milwaukee County Senior Centers. As envisioned, the **MSHF** would be supported by Milwaukee based organizations who have empathy for the challenge the senior centers face, believe in the promise of the MKE HUBS Report and acknowledge that independent financial stability is a necessary component of sustained success. The **MSHF** would oversee three coordinated philanthropic efforts.

MILWAUKEE SENIOR HUBS PROGRAMMING FUND

Programming that is currently taking place in the five existing MKE County Senior Centers is funded by the County which appropriates an average of \$1 Million per year. Experience has shown the real cost is closer to \$2 Million. The gap is usually closed through fund-raising efforts performed by the current contracted provider, Serving Older Adults. A permanent, ongoing fund can consolidate these efforts, and it is assumed that Milwaukee County will continue to contribute to the cost of programming.

REIMAGINING MILWAUKEE SENIOR HUBS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The current state of the 5 existing senior center structures has been documented in the **November 14, 2025 Informational Report** released to the County Board of Supervisors. It documents the extensive amount of deferred maintenance which accounts for the state of disrepair that plagues the current buildings. It also lists the number of scheduled capital improvements for each building,

many of which remain unfunded. Finally, the HUBS Report calls for numerous renovations of the existing buildings that will enable each of them to better align with the Attributes listed in the Report. The intent is that all three of these areas of concern should be addressed in one focused Capital Campaign.

MILWAUKEE SENIOR HUBS OPERATIONAL/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND

It will be essential to maintain these improved structures at a high level on an annual basis to ensure that they will not fall into disrepair and that there will be funding available to readily adapt the structures to the changing programmatic needs of future generations of users.

Thinking both strategically and long term, a radical approach must be explored to sustain the important functions and services Senior Centers provide to almost 200,000 older adults in Milwaukee County, by exploring ways to lift the financial burden of doing so from the County budget. Other County Institutions (Parks, Museum, Zoo, and most recently the Domes) have been forced to do the same to survive. County funding for programming and operations remains constrained and reliant almost entirely on property tax levy, leaving little flexibility to address inflationary costs or changing program expectations. The previous studies on this matter all affirm that Milwaukee County must reimagine how it delivers services for older adults – through new partnerships, shared facilities diversified funding and more inclusive, modern spaces.