

The Vermont Arthritis Program

Years One and Two Progress Summary

This program brief summarizes core program outcomes and developments of the Vermont Department of Health Arthritis Program from Jul. 2023—Jun. 2025.



About the Arthritis Program

The [Vermont Department of Health's Arthritis Program](#) works to improve arthritis management and quality of life for adults living with arthritis, and to develop systems to support arthritis management and care statewide.

Nearly **30%** of adults in Vermont have arthritis (29%), making it the most common chronic disease among Vermont adults.¹

To learn more about the extent of arthritis in Vermont, go to the [Arthritis Program's Health Surveillance webpage](#).

¹2023 VT BRFSS Data Summary



Program goals

The Arthritis Program has four primary goals:

1

Support **partner organizations** to offer a variety of Arthritis-appropriate Evidence-based Interventions (AAEBIs) statewide.

2

Work towards **sustaining access** to and the delivery of AAEBIs.

3

Raise awareness about the benefits of **physical activity counseling and AAEBIs** that are available for arthritis management among health care providers.

4

Reduce **arthritis disparities** among populations who are disproportionately affected by arthritis.

Partnerships and AAEBI Offerings

Seven funded partners in the state offer six types of AAEBIs. Partners are well-positioned to serve populations disproportionately impacted by arthritis such as older people, people in rural areas or people who face financial barriers to program enrollment. All programs are available for free.

















AAEBIs offered by partner organizations

AAEBI

	Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program (AFAP)
	Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP)
	Chronic Pain/ Disease Self-Management Workshops (CPSM/CDSM)
	Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives (PEARLS)
	Walk With Ease ((WWE) (in-person or self-directed enhanced (SDE))
	WWE (self-directed)

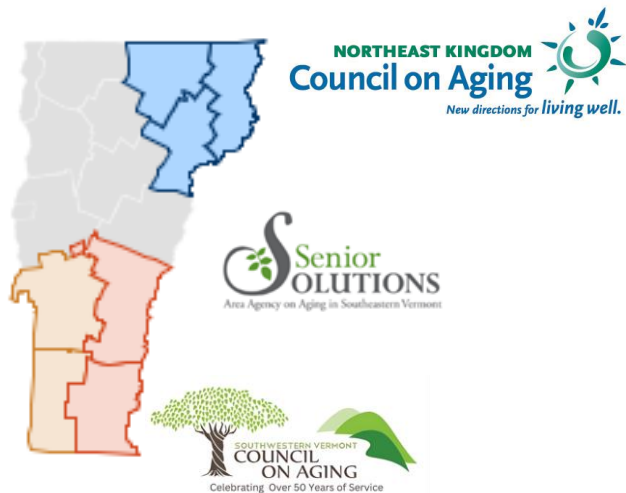
Partner organizations and AAEBI offerings

		Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging
		My Healthy Vermont (MHVT)
		Support and Services At Home (SASH)
		Senior Solutions: Council on Aging for SE VT
		Southwestern VT Council on Aging
		LiveWell Vermont
		University of Vermont (UVM) Osher Center for Integrative Health



Coverage by partner AAAs

Caledonia, Essex, Orleans, Windham, Windsor, Bennington and Rutland are principal counties served by partner Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).



Statewide coverage

Four partner organizations offer AAEBIs across the state.



Program Highlights

Although there is no cure for arthritis, it can be treated and managed with **AAEBIs** that include physical activity interventions and self-management workshops. Funded partners reported **training 31 leaders** in a variety of AAEBIs who **offered 53 workshops, engaging 608 people**. Of the 608 people, approximately 76% were aged 60 or older, 57% lived in rural communities, 11% identified as having a disability and 8% identified as low-income (>\$25,000). The **AAEBIs are available in-person and virtually**, accommodating various access needs and learning preferences.



Program enrollment



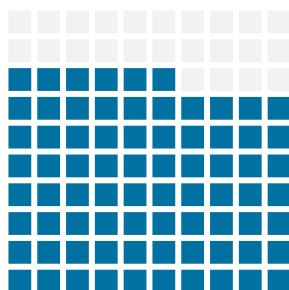
608 individuals enrolled in an AAEBI offered by a funded partner.



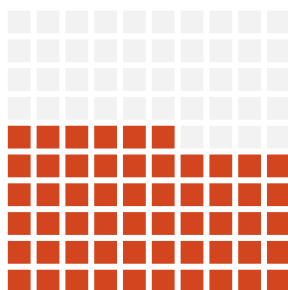
Populations of focus

Most enrollees in AAEBI programs were **age 60+** or living in a **rural area**.

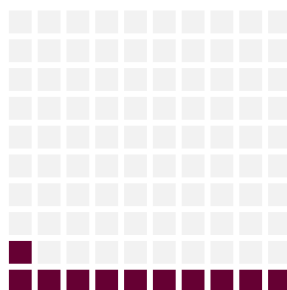
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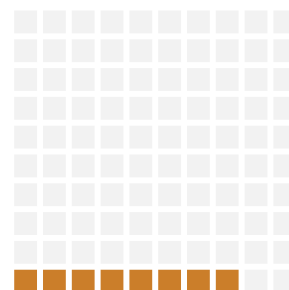
57% lived in a rural area



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8% identify as having a low-income



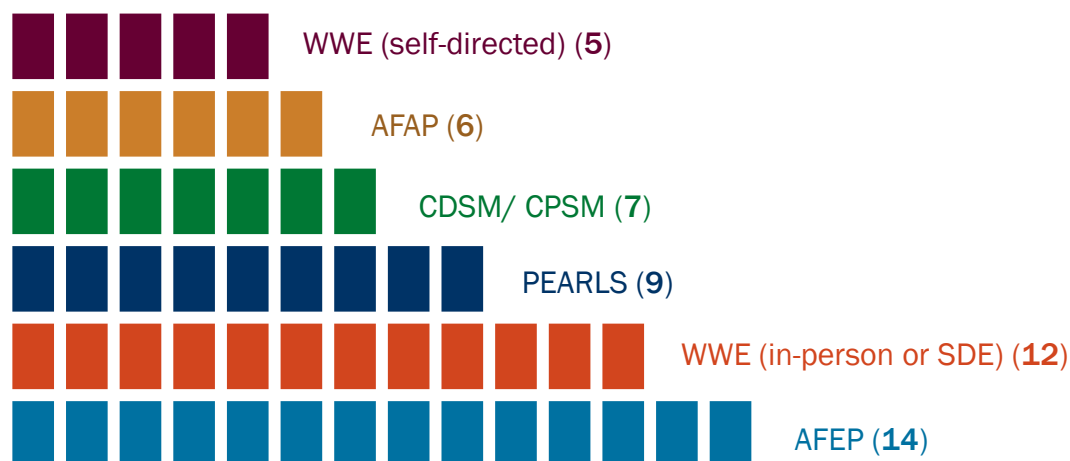
Program Highlights (continued)

Funded partners **trained 31 leaders** in a variety of AAEBIs who offered a **total of 53 workshops**.



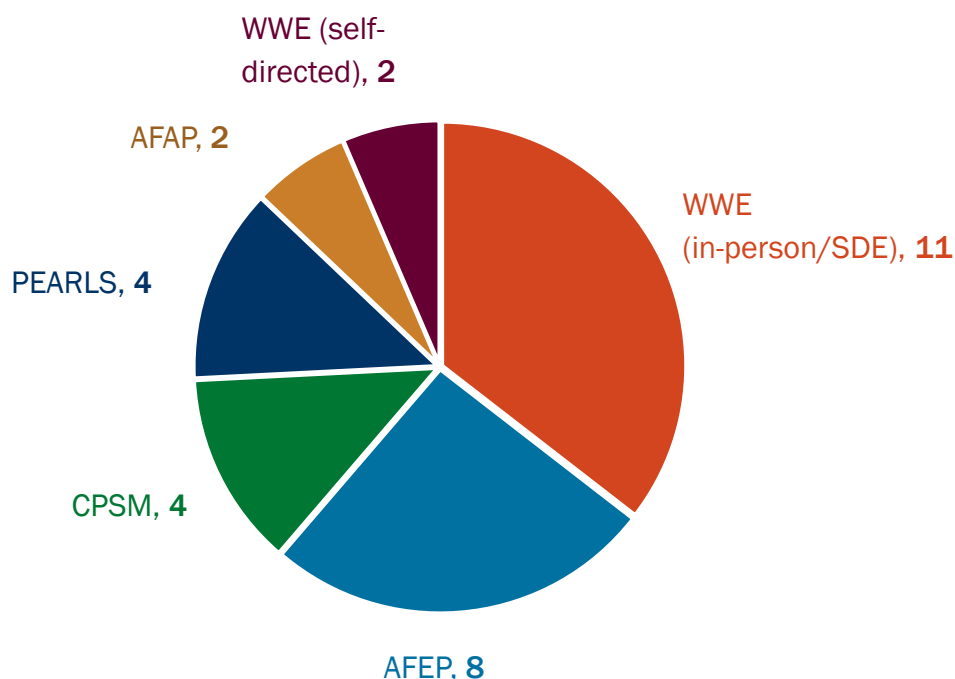
Workshops offered

53 AAEBI workshops or courses were offered. WWE (all types) and AFEP programs accounted for more than half (53%) of the workshops offered.



Workshop leaders trained

Partner organizations trained **31** workshop leaders across **six** types of AAEBIs.



AAEBI enrollment and workshop information based upon available program data.

Supporting Activities

The Arthritis Program focused on additional activities and programming that support quality of life for people with arthritis. Supporting activities included the launch of a new **Arthritis Program webpage**, release of new **data briefs**, **expanding partnerships and AAEBI programs**, as well as continued **networking and outreach opportunities** statewide.



Data, reporting and information systems

In its second year, the Arthritis Program developed and launched:

- 1) The [Arthritis Program webpage](#)
- 2) The [Arthritis Surveillance and Reporting webpage](#)
- 3) Three new data briefs on a range of arthritis topics:
 - [Arthritis Burden Among Adults 40+](#)
 - [Arthritis Impacts on Quality of Life](#)
 - [Arthritis and Social Isolation Risk](#)



Partnerships and programs

The Arthritis Program established two new partnerships in its second year to enhance AAEBI offerings statewide:

- The UVM Osher Center for Integrative Health is offering the Walk With Ease (WWE) program. To hear more about this partnership, check out this recorded [segment](#) on *Across The Fence* produced by UVM Extension.
- A new opportunity where participants can complete the WWE program while enrolled in the [MHVT Diabetes Prevention Program](#).



Outreach, promotion and networking opportunities

Outreach and networking is critical to promote AAEBI offerings and to expand referral networks from health care and other providers. Outreach efforts included:

- A kickoff meeting for statewide partners and persons with a vested interest in the Arthritis Program goals (Jun. 2024).
- Two presentations to health care providers hosted by Blueprint for Health (Dec. 2024) and Bi-State Primary Care Association (Apr. 2025).
- Continued networking and engagement with organizations such as the Vermont Physical Therapist and Occupation Therapist Associations, and the [Falls Free Vermont Coalition](#).

Arthritis Program Blueprint Lunch & Learn

December 13, 2024

Agenda

- VDH Arthritis Grant
- About Arthritis
- Physical Activity
- Arthritis Appropriate Evidence Based Strategies (AAEBIS)
- Additional Resources



Looking Ahead to Year Three

In addition to its continued momentum in increasing the capacity and infrastructure of AAEBI programs in Vermont, in FY26 the Arthritis Program plans to focus activities **to raise awareness among health care providers about the benefits of physical activity counseling and encourage referrals to AAEBIs.**



A focus on health care providers and community health teams

Health Care Providers (HCPs) can play a role in arthritis management and treatment by offering physical activity counseling and suggesting AAEBIs to help patients safely maintain an active lifestyle and manage their arthritis symptoms.

Planned activities to further engage HCPs in year three include:

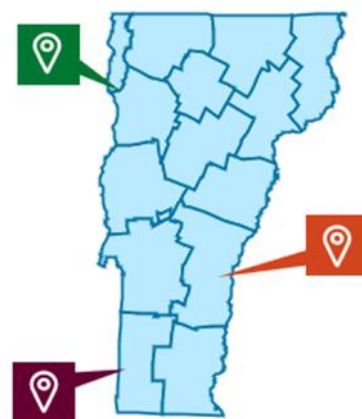
- Continued presentations, outreach and resource-sharing to HCPs.
- Surveying HCPs statewide on their referral practices to AAEBIs and to learn more about ways to advance HCP relationships with the Arthritis Program.
- Engaging Community Health Teams (CHTs) through the 12 Offices of Local Health (★) to bolster community-care linkages and referrals to AAEBIs.



Mapping AAEBI offerings, information and services statewide

The Arthritis Program will develop an interactive map with complete information on arthritis resources in Vermont, including:

- The types and locations of AAEBIs offered statewide.
- What organizations provide AAEBIs.
- Enrollment and referral information for AAEBIs.



For more information

For more information about the Arthritis Program, use this link: [Vermont Department of Health “Contact Us” webpage](#).