

LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR CONTRACT

Under Title III of the Older Americans Act  
Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

Summary Sheet

Applicant Agency: Befrienders Project Director: Kristin VanDeWalle  
 Mailing Address: 807 N Tracy Ave Street Address: 807 N Tracy Ave  
 City, State, Zip: Bozeman, MT 59715 City, State, Zip: Bozeman, MT 59715  
 E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization:  
 City     County     Private Non-Profit     Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_


Geographic area to be served: Gallatin County (Bozeman, Belgrade, Big Sky, Manhattan, Churchill, Three Forks, Gallatin Gateway), Park County (Livingston and surrounding area)


List services to be provided:	Estimated # of unduplicated <i>persons</i> to be served during project period for each service type:	Estimated # of unduplicated <i>units</i> of service during project period for each listed service type:
Companion Services	310	14,570
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Applicant agrees that the project described in this Letter of Intent will be operational July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027 and certifies that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information in this application is true and correct and the attached conditions will be complied with if the contract is awarded.

Kristin VanDeWalle  
 Type or print person authorized to sign  
**Executive Director**

Title  
Amanda Torgerson  
 Type or print person authorized to sign  
**Board President**  
 Title

  
 Signature  
3/24/2026  
 Date

  
 Signature  
3/25/2026  
 Date

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**Project Description Sheet**

(Please fill out a *Project Description Sheet* for each service provided.  
Attach additional pages if necessary to complete the following questions.)

1. Service or Project name: **Befrienders - Befriend-A-Senior & Lend-A-Hand Programs**

2. Provide a description of how your program will spend the Title III funding.

Title III funding will support Befrienders' evidence-informed volunteer companionship and practical assistance programs that reduce social isolation and support independent living among older adults in Gallatin & Park Counties and surrounding rural areas. Befrienders currently serves over 200 older adults annually through more than 300 trained volunteers, providing structured weekly companionship and task-based assistance that addresses social determinants of health.

Funds will be used to:

- ~Recruit, screen, and train volunteers, including background checks and transportation credential verification
- ~Deliver the Lend-A-Hand program, which provides essential support such as simple household tasks & repairs, technology assistance, home safety tasks, and daily living support
- ~Coordinate outreach and matching services for high-risk seniors, including those living alone, experiencing mobility limitations, or residing in rural communities
- ~Provide engagement opportunities such as structured social outings and intergenerational programming

In the past year, Befrienders volunteers provided over 17,000 hours of direct service, contributing to measurable reductions in reported loneliness and increased participation in community activities. Title III funding will sustain service delivery while enabling strategic expansion to meet increasing demand driven by demographic growth among adults age 65+.

3. Statement of how your project will coordinate services with other community programs. (Include a description of referral systems.)

Befrienders operates within a coordinated aging services network to ensure efficient use of resources and comprehensive support for older adults.

Key coordination activities include:

- ~Healthcare referrals: Hospitals, clinics, and care managers refer socially isolated patients to Befrienders for non-medical support
- ~Senior nutrition and housing partners: Coordination with Meals on Wheels, HRDC, food banks, senior centers, and housing providers ensures wraparound services
- ~Behavioral health linkage: Collaboration with crisis and mental health programs supports early intervention for socially isolated seniors
- ~Veteran outreach: Partnership with VA services supports aging veterans experiencing isolation
- ~University partnership: MSU service-learning programs provide trained intergenerational volunteers

Through this networked approach, Befrienders addresses gaps in social support services that are not otherwise funded through traditional aging programs, thereby strengthening the continuum of care.

4. Statement of how your project will fulfill the mission of the Older Americans Act. (Include a description of criteria for selection of clients, outreach and targeting activities and how the project fulfills the objectives of the Older Americans Act.)

Befrienders directly supports OAA goals by delivering community-based services that enhance independence, dignity, and social well-being among older adults.

Program outcomes align with OAA priorities by:

- ~Reducing social isolation through consistent, relationship-based volunteer engagement
- ~Supporting aging in place through practical assistance that reduces safety risks and functional decline
- ~Prioritizing outreach to rural seniors, low-income individuals, and those with functional limitations
- ~Promoting intergenerational engagement that strengthens community integration
- ~Supporting informal monitoring of well-being through trained volunteer contact

Data collected through participant surveys and ongoing monitoring demonstrates improvements in:

- ~Social connectedness
- ~Emotional well-being
- ~Ability to remain safely in home environments

These outcomes directly contribute to the OAA mandate to promote community living and prevent unnecessary institutionalization.

5. If extra funding was available, what would you do to increase services and how would you plan to spend the money?

Additional Title III investment would allow Befrienders to:

- ~Reduce current waitlists for companionship and task-based assistance
- ~Expand services in rural communities where transportation and social isolation barriers are significant
- ~Increase volunteer training capacity in dementia awareness, fall-risk mitigation, and digital inclusion
- ~Implement enhanced outcome measurement tools to track changes in loneliness, engagement, and independence

Projected expansion would increase annual service capacity by 15 - 25%, enabling more high-risk seniors to access preventative social support services that reduce long-term healthcare and institutional care costs.

The Older Americans Act requirements state that aging providers are supposed to “target resources from all appropriate sources to meet the needs of older persons with the greatest economic or social need, with particular attention to low income, low income minority, those residing in rural areas, and elders who are disabled and frail. Providers are also required to ensure access to service based on certain economic, demographic and geographic factors.”

6. Please provide letters of support from other local community-based and/or institutional programs, agencies or organizations involved with older adults.
7. List wage range of all employees funded in full or in part by this contract: \$ 26.50/hr to \$ 32/hr.
8. Is this project covered by liability insurance? Yes How much? 2,000,000
8. How many years has this project received Title III funds: 18 years
10. Please provide a **detailed** estimated budget for this Title III service for the fiscal year 2026-2027 as follows (list appropriate estimated resources):

**PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM BELOW, YOU MAY SUBMIT ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION IF NECESSARY.**  
 (Your expenses should equal your resources)

**Expenses:**

Personnel and fringe:	<u>130,000</u>
Supplies:	<u>3,000</u>
Raw food/meals:	<u>                    </u>
Commodities:	<u>                    </u>
Communications:	<u>15,000</u>
Utilities:	<u>                    </u>
Repairs/maintenance:	<u>                    </u>
Travel/training:	<u>4,000</u>
Building space:	<u>                    </u>
Insurance:	<u>4,000</u>
Equipment:	<u>                    </u>
Contracted services:	<u>1,000</u>
Audit:	<u>                    </u>
Other:	<u>1,000</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ <u>158,000</u></b>

**Resources:**

Area IV Funds:	<u>15,000</u>
Project income:	<u>                    </u>
Other Resources:	<u>143,000</u>
Cash in Lieu:	<u>                    </u>
Commodities:	<u>                    </u>
Match:	<u>                    </u>
Other:	<u>                    </u>
Other:	<u>                    </u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ <u>158,000</u></b>

**Application deadline - The electronic application and 2 copies must be received by Rocky before 4 p.m. Friday, March 27, 2026. Applications received after this deadline date will not be considered for funding.**

**The contractor presentations will be on Zoom again this year.**

**The date of the Area IV Board Meeting is May 21, 2026 at 9:00am.**

# Bozeman Senior Social Center

*"Focusing on the opportunities of positive aging"*

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Jon Gorton

Area IV Agency on Aging

PO Box 1717

Helena, MT 59624

Dear Jon,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Befrienders Program, an initiative dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and emotional well-being of our senior community members through companionship, empathy, and consistent social connection.

As you know, loneliness and social isolation are among the most pressing issues facing older adults today. Many seniors live alone or far from family, and the lack of regular social interaction contributes to declining mental and physical health. The Befrienders Program directly addresses this challenge by pairing trained volunteers with seniors for friendly visits, phone calls, and activities that foster genuine relationships and community belonging.

The program not only alleviates loneliness but also helps participants stay engaged and connected to local resources. Feedback from seniors and volunteers alike reflects meaningful impacts—renewed sense of purpose, improved mood, and lasting friendships that strengthen the fabric of our community.

Your funding would enable the Befrienders Program to:

- Recruit and train more volunteers;
- Expand outreach to underserved areas;
- Provide ongoing support and coordination for matches; and
- Develop resources to measure and share the program's outcomes.

By supporting Befrienders, you are investing in human connection—the foundation of a healthy, compassionate community. I wholeheartedly endorse this program and urge your consideration of funding that will allow it to continue and grow its vital work.

Thank you for your time and commitment to improving the lives of seniors.

Warm regards,  
Shannon Bondy, Executive Director, Bozeman Senior Center

(406) 586-2421

