

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



IONA



Iona's Saturday Respite Program

AS A LEADER, I have a responsibility to use my voice and position to openly and loudly affirm that Black Lives Matter and to ensure Iona's work is rooted in anti-racism.

Supporting diverse clients and participants by keeping them healthy and safe means that as a staff we must also actively be anti-racist in our work. To be fully healthy and safe means to be free from racism and discrimination, and this extends to our clients, participants, staff, volunteers, donors, and entire community. We must be relentless in making services accessible to all. We honor this work as we open a new adult day health center in Southeast DC to help address inequities in access to vital services for marginalized older adults and family members in Washington, DC. My pledge as Executive Director is to deepen Iona's pursuit to be an anti-racist and inclusive organization both as a staff and within our programming and services, to pursue tangible actions so our employees of color have the resources they need to feel supported, and to ensure that all of our employees have resources to address inherent bias. Institutional racism does not directly affect each of us equally, but we all have a role to play in fighting it.

Sally S. White

CARING, CONNECTING, NOURISHING

A MESSAGE FROM IONA'S PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY, Iona has been fighting social isolation, offering older adults companionship, a sense of purpose, and a safety net. But even with 45 years of experience, in 2020 we faced a test we never could have expected: How to build and maintain connections and community while remaining physically distant in order to protect the health of our clients, staff, and volunteers.

With critical support from our loyal community, Iona's remarkable team rose to the challenge, finding solutions we couldn't have imagined were possible a year ago. We are in awe of what you helped us accomplish in 2020—and we give you our heartfelt thanks.

When we sent out the call for shelf-stable food, paper and cleaning products, and other essential items for older adults in need, you responded in droves. When we needed to invest in unexpected expenses such as Personal Protective Equipment for frontline staff and additional technology for taking our services online, you were there for us. In the last year, you helped us be the safety net for clients who were at the greatest risk—older adults who are food insecure, medically compromised, or aging on their own—as well as family caregivers stretched to the brink. Thank you for your generosity and caring.

While we can't yet fully measure the impact of extended social isolation caused by the pandemic on the mental health of older adults and their family caregivers, we know it is profound. Your contributions allowed us to shift to virtual support groups, mental health

psychotherapy, case and care management, and social activities that, in the words of many of our clients, were a lifeline.

Above all, one thing became crystal clear this year: Iona is an essential service. We save lives. And that is all possible because of *you*.

As this report goes to press, there's light at the end of the tunnel. Iona has safely reopened its two adult day health centers for small groups, and case managers have begun socially distanced home visits. In Washington, DC, older adults have been approved to receive the vaccine, with the rest of us following in the coming months. We continue to be inspired by the collective spirit of resilience and support that you and our clients have shown us. In these uncertain times, thank you for caring so deeply about your older adult neighbors and for being part of our incredible community.

Sally S. White
Executive Director

Rita W. Ross
Board President



Above all, one thing became crystal clear this year:
Iona is an essential service. We save lives. And that is all
possible because of *you*.



Program Specialist Keith Jones and Checonya Bittle

A Sanctuary East of the River

AFTER MANY MONTHS of construction and anticipation, Iona's new Washington Home Center opened its doors to a small number of clients in fall 2020. This state-of-the-art facility—which serves individuals with dementia and physical and intellectual disabilities—is the only adult day health center located in Southeast DC.

Checonya Bittle, 63, is one of the center's first participants. He lives in Ward 8 with his sister, Janie Horn, 68, his primary caregiver. A former karate trainer, Checonya has dementia and struggles with mobility.

During the early weeks of quarantine, Janie had grown increasingly concerned about her brother. Most days, he stayed at home with a hired caregiver watching the same TV shows over and over while Janie was at work. "I was so upset," she says. "He was spending the time deteriorating."

But things immediately changed for the better once Janie discovered Iona's Washington Home Center. When Checonya first arrived, "he was bent over and unsteady on his feet," she says. Iona staff worked with him to stand tall and move with ease unassisted. Their mantra, Janie says, is "You can do this!"

Janie, who drops her brother off before going to her full-time job as an administrative assistant, appreciates that the new center is only 10 minutes from their Congress Heights apartment. "When you are in a certain income bracket and live in certain DC neighborhoods, you don't have access to the same resources as other people," says Janie. "Hats off to Iona for bringing the same opportunities that exist elsewhere to residents east of the River."

Today, Checonya enjoys going to the center three days a week, where

staff engage him in exercise, art projects, and singing along to his favorite Motown songs. "This is so much better for my brother than sitting at home," says Janie. "He's stimulated all day, and it's good for him to have other people in his life—professional staff who work on his memory recall. If he wasn't there, he would waste away."

Janie also gets support from Iona on the days Checonya doesn't go to the center. "The staff calls to ask how he's doing and provide him with activities to do at home," she says. "That helps me a lot. I'm really happy with his progress."

As Checonya's big sister and caregiver, "I don't think about myself a lot," Janie says. But the staff ask about Janie as well and remind her to take care of herself. Her response: She and her brother are doing great, thanks to Iona and its passionate staff.

CARING



“If he wasn’t there, he would waste away.”



Program Specialist Tina Meadows and Checonya Bittle



Clinical Nurse Manager Margaret Mitchell

THANK YOU

In 2019, The Washington Home donated \$1 million to Iona for its adult day health center in Ward 8. “In our new status as a foundation, The Washington Home was pleased to make one of our initial major grants to Iona to support build-out of its new center in Southeast DC. This facility will fill a gap in local services for elder residents in that area of our city,” says Sharon Collins Casey, Board Chair, The Washington Home.

Read our complete list of Capital Campaign supporters on p. 24.



Betty and Robert Lowenstein

Learning to Lean on Other Caregivers

THE PAST YEAR has been a challenging one for Betty Lowenstein. In September, her husband Robert passed away at age 102. Married for 47 years, the couple met when she worked for him at the Atomic Energy Commission. “It was a temporary job that turned into a long-term arrangement,” she says with a laugh.

Betty turns serious when recounting how she spent nearly a decade caring for Robert, who was in perfect health until a 2012 fall led to a series of health challenges. “Thank goodness for Iona’s caregiver support group, which has been a lifeline—especially during the pandemic,” she says.

“Not long ago, I had no idea what a support group was,” says Betty, 93. “I was hesitant to join and didn’t have any idea how it would help. Now I’m addicted.”

Facilitated by Iona staff and volunteers, support groups give participants an opportunity to talk confidentially with other members who have similar experiences, find emotional support, gain practical advice, and compare notes on resources.

Of the caregivers’ group, Betty says, “While everyone has a different set of problems, we all have one thing in common: we feel like we are in crisis 24 hours a day.” Sometimes when you talk about your life to friends and family, she says, it sounds as if you’re complaining. But “when you talk to people who are going through the same thing, it’s problem solving.”

Betty feels grateful that her participation in Iona’s support groups didn’t end once she lost her husband. She recently joined the After Caregiving Grief Support Group, for individuals with a loved one who has died from a long-term chronic illness.

Praising the warmth and expertise of the facilitators, she says, “If you feel like collapsing from the emotional strain, they say just the right thing to get you back on your feet.”

195 older adults and family caregivers received solace, friendship, and resources from Iona support groups in 2020.

63 individuals navigated the challenges and opportunities of aging and caregiving last year through Iona mental health psychotherapy.

CONNECTING



“Not long ago, I had no idea what a support group was. I was hesitant to join and didn’t have any idea how it would help. Now I’m addicted.”

Iona offers **20** support groups for:

- ▶ After Caregiving Grief
- ▶ Transitions in Aging
- ▶ Individuals with Memory Loss, Low Vision, or Parkinson’s disease
- ▶ LGBTQ Older Adults
- ▶ People Caring for Their Spouse or Partner
- ▶ Family Caregivers
- ▶ Adult Child Caregivers
- ▶ Caregivers of Partners/Spouses with Dementia
- ▶ Adult Children Caring for Parents with Memory Loss

Finding Friends and Fighting Isolation—on Zoom



“THIS TIME LAST YEAR, many of us had never heard of Zoom,” says retired Human Resources professional Beth Merricks. Then the pandemic hit, and Around Town DC programs moved to the online video platform. Now, like hundreds of her peers, Beth is a veteran Zoom user.

Prior to the pandemic, Around Town DC events for people 60 and over were held at Iona’s building on Albemarle Street and other sites throughout Northwest Washington. Launched in 2019 with support from the D.C. Department of Aging and Community Living to promote wellness, build community, and combat loneliness among older adults in Wards 2 and 3, Around Town DC offers dozens of free classes, workshops, and events that are listed on a searchable online directory: www.aroundtowndc.org.



“Around Town DC has been a godsend,” says Beth. She doesn’t have a car and relies on public transportation, which she hasn’t used since the pandemic began. Now, she can

do all the activities she wants right at home. In particular, Beth is a fan of the yoga and Zumba fitness classes, which she takes three times a week. She also has participated

- AROUND TOWN VIA ZOOM: ■ 1. Ukulele class led by John Linn ■ 2. Sherlock Holmes discussion group ■ 3. Advanced Drawing II led by Zola Monroe Art Group, LLC



“Around Town and Iona have been a lifesaver.”

in tai chi, financial planning, and social media sessions.

“Around Town DC has been my salvation,” says LaVerne Holmes, 72. She lives alone, and three of her close friends died in 2020. “Getting used to the ‘new normal’ has been an adjustment,” she says.

But then a friend told LaVerne about Around Town DC, and she was quickly hooked. “From the beginning, I loved the variety of programs offered,” she says. Today, she is active in yoga three days a week, and she has enjoyed classes about African American art, decluttering, and cooking. “I didn’t know I could dance until I began taking Ruth’s Zumba classes. She always puts a smile on my face!” LaVerne says.

“The staff work hard to offer quality programs and select the most knowledgeable and caring educators,” she adds. “They’ve done an extraordinary job.”

Around Town DC program manager Lena Frumin has been an ever-present source of support for participants, helping them learn how to use Zoom, create accounts on the Around Town DC website, and access programs.

“Lena knows all of us,” says Irene Albritton, 74, who discovered Around Town DC when she was looking for something to do while sheltering at home. “If I miss a class, Lena checks to make sure I’m okay.”

Irene participates in a discussion group, conversational Spanish, yoga, exercise classes, and journal writing. She likes to end the week with the online “DISdance” party on Fridays. “Even though we’ve never met in person, I now have all these virtual friends.”

“Around Town and Iona have been a lifesaver,” she adds.

1,934 older adults have learned about African American art, discussed Sherlock Holmes and Jane Austin, written and acted in films, shared virtual meals, and found connection through 1,208 sessions of Around Town DC since it began in 2019.

Around Town DC is supported by a grant from the D.C. Department of Aging and Community Living.

NOURISHING

Iona managed the delivery of

51,419 emergency meals to 326 older adults sheltering in place, for a total of 94,319 meals delivered in 2020.



Iona food drive and Food Pantry Plus



Iona volunteer Renée Perrier delivers groceries and basic necessities to older DC residents.

274 older adults have received 1,064 deliveries of essential food and basic necessities directly to their homes since the Food Pantry Plus program began.

“This experience brought out the best of humanity.”



Sally S. White unpacking donations from a generous neighbor.

Coming Together to Beat Senior Hunger

ON MARCH 13, 2020, Washington, DC, shut down—and so did Iona.

Many older adults suddenly found themselves cut off from professional aides, family, and food sources. On top of that, last year DC had the highest food insecurity rate for older adults in the country, with one in five at risk for hunger and malnutrition. What was already a crisis became, for a growing number of seniors, a daily nightmare.

Within days, Iona’s Nutrition team identified a new way to get groceries out to those in need, and Iona’s Food Pantry Plus was born. In April, a call went out to Iona’s community, and cars from throughout the city lined up, bumper to bumper, as hundreds of generous donors dropped off bags of basic necessities: shelf-stable food, paper products, cleaning supplies, and toiletries.

By the end of the day, Iona’s fitness center resembled an overstuffed minimart. Iona volunteers helped deliver the food and supplies to older adults across all eight Wards of the city.

“Many people had nothing,” says Iona Food Pantry Plus/Volunteer Manager Tania Sechriest. “Our goal was to get food to them by the next day, if not sooner. You can’t imagine the relief these deliveries have meant—especially to those with health risks, no way of traveling to a grocery store or ordering groceries online, or very little income.”

When Iona’s in-person programs had to close, like our lunchtime Active Wellness Program at St. Alban’s, hundreds of older adults also lost their reliable source of meals, nourishment, and socialization. Iona quickly teamed up with the D.C. Department of Aging and Community Living to facilitate weekly emergency meal deliveries.

Renée Perrier, a clinical social worker and mother of two, is one of many Iona volunteers who helped meet this need by delivering meals and groceries to clients each week. “My girls knew Thursday was my day to help Iona,” says Renée, who grew up volunteering in her hometown of New Orleans. Her 11-year-old, who sometimes accompanied her on deliveries, said, “Mommy, it’s wonderful you are doing this for older people who shouldn’t be out. I’m proud of you.”

“We couldn’t have done this without our volunteers—grad students, people working from home, stay-at-home parents,” adds Tania. “It takes a special person to make a weekly commitment in these dark times. They didn’t want to disappoint our clients.”

Renée recalls one client who she got to know on the phone before dropping off his groceries. “We connected over our love of music and New Orleans,” she says, adding that each of her clients has expressed overwhelming appreciation for Iona. “This experience brought out the best of humanity.”

The Power of Love in Action



Jessie Lee Washington
and Sally S. White



*“Iona’s spirit
of love is
embedded in the
organization.”*

WHEN JESSIE LEE WASHINGTON became a financial professional six years ago, it wasn’t her intention to specialize in helping people who are aging on their own. But as her practice grew, she recognized a trend: Many of her clients were aging solo. “When you’re aging on your own—as I am—you don’t have a natural support system to help manage financial, legal, and health care matters, so you have to create one,” says Jessie, 52.

After being invited to lead a financial planning session for Iona’s Aging Solo series and taking a Heart of Iona public tour, Jessie came to value the role Iona plays in the community as a trusted resource—especially for those who feel they have nowhere else to turn. “Iona has evolved to be a critical resource for seniors in Washington, DC,” she says.

Last spring, Jessie participated in Iona’s first virtual Heart of Caring luncheon, which drew attention to the dire needs older adults were facing because of the pandemic. “You cannot imagine the urgent requests for help we’re receiving during this crisis,” Executive Director Sally White told the gathering. She mentioned a frail and bedbound man in his late 90s who was abandoned by his home care providers because he tested positive for COVID-19. Iona became his safety net, coordinating food, regular wellness phone calls, and care at home.

- (RIGHT) ■ 1. Food Pantry Plus youth volunteer
- ■ 2. Iona's Washington Home Center
- ■ 3. Iona's Wellness & Arts Center
- ■ 4. Food Pantry Plus client



Sally also recounted getting a desperate email from a woman who lives by herself. “She was anxious being alone and didn’t know who else to contact,” Sally said. “Iona was able to connect her to free online fitness classes, book clubs, and discussion groups.”

“Too many people rely on Iona for food, mental health therapy, and care coordination,” Sally added. “We will continue to offer them care, connection, and nourishment for today and tomorrow.”

Jessie was so moved by the Heart of Caring luncheon that when she learned that her company, New York Life, was looking to honor extraordinary individuals who embodied the value of selflessness during the pandemic, she jumped at the chance to nominate Iona’s Executive Director. This fall, Sally was honored for her exemplary service. As recognition for her contributions to the community, Sally selected Iona as the recipient of a Love Takes Action grant, and the organization received \$50,000 in general operating support.

“Iona’s spirit of love is embedded in the organization,” says Jessie.

“Twenty-twenty was a tough year, and we saw the pandemic hit older adults particularly hard,” says Sally. “But I’m so proud of Iona’s staff for transitioning our programs to online and going above and beyond to ensure that clients and their families’ needs were met. We are delighted to receive and accept this award.”

Thank you, Iona volunteers!

Because you **cared**, you provided companionship to isolated older adults, even at a distance.

Because you wanted to **connect**, you led engaging online activities for your older neighbors.

Because you were driven to **nourish**, you delivered meals and groceries to seniors in need, week after week.

In 2020, 758 volunteers gave 7,496 hours of their time, energy, and commitment to Iona. Thank you for being a part of our community—you are essential to our work. If you'd like to join us, contact our Volunteer Manager at volunteer@iona.org.

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We couldn't have done this without you.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF 1,656 DONORS in fiscal year 2020 (October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020), we were able to find new ways to care for older adults and family caregivers, including bringing programs online, opening an adult day health center in Ward 8, providing emergency nutrition support, and so much more.

Your financial support ensures that Iona can help our community continue to navigate the challenges and embrace the opportunities of aging. Make a contribution by using the enclosed envelope, calling (202) 895-9418, or visiting www.iona.org/donate-now.

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**** Safety Net Society Member.** These donors make a monthly gift to Iona. Join the Safety Net Society now at www.iona.org/monthly.

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Iona's staff mourned the sudden death of our colleague, Mike Waxman, in May 2020. Mike passionately supported our development team as Philanthropic Gift Manager (he previously worked on Iona's Money Management team). During his time, many of Iona's donors and clients interacted with Mike, who was outgoing, kind, funny, and incredibly caring.

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Silver Circles: Supporting LGBTQ Older Adults

Since 2018, Iona and Whitman-Walker Health have offered Silver Circles, peer-led support groups for LGBTQ older adults. In 2020, three of the four circles increased their meeting frequency from bimonthly to weekly. “Our newest member’s father was passing in hospice. She expressed what that is like for her being so far from her dad. She talked about the sadness, feeling alone, and the joy her dad has brought to her life,” says Tony Burns, a Silver Circles facilitator. “Her sharing facilitated the opening up of the group to be authentic. It was something to witness. I have facilitated groups before, but this Silver Circle is just so special!”

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The Deborah Blum Fund

Former Iona social worker Deborah Blum brought an unshakable love and respect for her clients, assisting hundreds of older adults in Washington, DC. After her retirement, the Deborah Blum Fund was established to meet emergency client needs that are not covered by government programs, such as purchasing identification and documents, compression socks, incontinence products, utility bills, and extermination services. Recently, the Deborah Blum Fund helped secure a new photo ID for a cognitively impaired client living in subsidized housing so he could withdraw cash from his bank to buy food and toiletries and purchase money orders to pay his utility bills.

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Memory Cafes at Iona

During months of the year with a fifth Friday, Iona's Wellness and Arts Center staff host a Memory Cafe for participants with memory loss and their family caregivers. One longtime volunteer, Cricket, recounted: "I wanted to thank you all so much for the Halloween Memory Cafe. This was the first time when I really felt what it was like to be on the other side of the line, not a part of the providers, but one of the receivers. How much I needed it, how good it felt—to be dancing, singing, all by myself in my box-filled basement room, monitor with no mic or camera, but still part of all of you, and the energy and good feeling that was coming across the room. And even though I couldn't talk or be seen, you still managed to include me, in what you were saying, and writing—just as I bet everybody felt included. So I really got to experience the power of Iona. I'm glad you're there. And that you've found ways to keep doing what you do. How valuable it is!"

Jane Leonard
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Mary Leshner
Richard Levie and Sally Levie
Michelle Levister
Judy Levy and
George M. Ruby
Richard Levy
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Diane McCullough
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Edwin Menzenwerth
Ruth Merryman

Elizabeth Messman
Lisa Mezzetti
MaryAnn Miller
Stephen Miller
Susan Miller
M. Christina Miner
Gloria Minott
Marcia Mitnick and
Arthur Mitnick
Dean Mohs
Lanning Moldauer
Elfriede Moore
Michele R. Morris
Graham Mulligan
Allen Myers
Samia Nassar
Kathryn Navascues
Paulette Nehama
Essence Newhoff
Ruth Newhouse
Jack Newman
Sydney Nixon
Janet Novotny
Frances Nowak
Su Nu
Anne O'Connor
Jane O'Grady
Matthew O'Hara
Bennett Ohia
Gay Ohlrich
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Barbara Wortmann
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Hope Z. Zoss

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JoEllen Fishman and
Alan D. Fishman
In Memory of
Patricia “Tish” Alsop
Joni McIlvain
*In Memory of Alfred Balfour
and Edith Tornow Balfour*
Guillermo A. Balfour and
Anna Maria Balfour
In Memory of Phil Brown
Barbara Wolanin
In Memory of Theresa Bruno
Candice Bruno
*In Memory of Dr. Stephen
Carney*
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Michael Robichaud
Peter Taft
Jonathan Vaughn
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Christenberry*
Sandra Christenberry
*In Memory of Myrna
Cooperstein*
Gerald Cooperstein
*In Memory of Jacqueline
DeLima*
Rita DeLima

In Memory of
Cleopatra “Cleo” Dibble
Lorelei Corcoran
Alexandra Dibble
In Memory of Abe Feldman
David Coleman
In Memory of Rose Fortier
Polly Harrison
In Memory of Phyllis M. Frick
Ann Keeler
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Mort Goldstein*
Judith Goldstein
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Anonymous
John Martz and JoAnn
Martz
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Guide*
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Vicky Hall
Judy Levy and
George M. Ruby
In Memory of
James Dewayne Johnson
Sterlin Johnson
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Laura Jackson
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Carol Knouse

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Kimberly Ferguson
In Memory of Mollie Kumin
Linda Kumin
In Memory of
Marie-Louise Slidell Leahy
C. K. Mallory and
Florence Mallory
*In Memory of Y.S. and
Anna C. Lee*
Benjamin Lee and
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Lilliam Collmann
Karlene Masters
In Memory of
Dr. Elaine Vande Hei
Richard P. Vande Hei



4,321 Questions Answered

Iona's Helpline saw a 7% increase in calls in 2020, many of which were related to concerns about the pandemic. From April to June, requests for nutrition and meal assistance tripled—exceeding those made in all of 2019—and Helpline Specialists answered an average of 19 calls a day.

Do you or someone you care about have aging-related questions or concerns? Iona's Helpline Specialists are here for you. Call **(202) 895-9448** on Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM-5:00 PM or email info@iona.org.

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 Lynne Van Dyke
 Glenn E. Skaggs and
 Elsa P. Skaggs
In Memory of Mike Waxman
 Anonymous
 Ellen Amster
 Donna Bardin
 Mark Bartlett
 Mark Borell
 Rayna Caplan
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In Memory of Inez Zvonkin
 Judith Zvonkin

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A special thank you to all of our United Way of the National Capital Area and CFC Donors for the 2019-20 campaign year. Please note, some donors remain anonymous to us or have requested no acknowledgment.
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Every gift supports Iona's mission to help people age well and live well. We appreciate all the donors who contributed in fiscal year 2020. Thank you! We strive for accuracy. If your information is incorrect or if you prefer to be listed differently in the future, please contact us at (202) 895-9416 or akeeler@iona.org.

Financials

FY October 1, 2019—September 30, 2020
(audited)

REVENUES

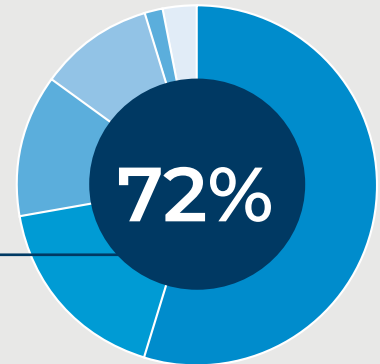
Government and Foundation Grants	\$4,587,379
Donations	\$1,467,953
Participant Income and Insurance Reimbursements	\$1,057,512
Other Income	\$868,627
Investment Income	\$128,162
Donated Services and Facilities	<u>\$247,223</u>
Total Revenue	\$8,356,856

EXPENSES

Administration	\$705,513
Fundraising	\$414,926
Program Services	<u>\$5,948,388</u>
Total Expenses	\$7,068,827

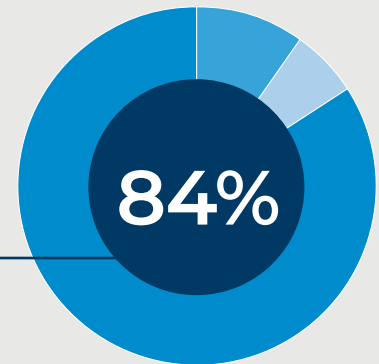
*\$921,489 is donor restricted beyond 2020 for the future operations of Iona's Washington Home Center in Southeast DC.

FY20 REVENUES



72% of revenue came from individual donations (17%) and grants (55%).

FY20 EXPENSES



84% of FY20 expenses went to directly support program services.

6% was for fundraising and 10% was for administrative expenses.

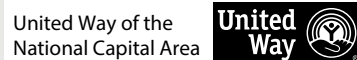
Your philanthropic support makes life better for older adults and family caregivers in Washington, DC. Thank you for making this year possible. For our full financial report, please visit www.iona.org/about/financials.



Iona's sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency earned us five consecutive 4-star ratings from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator.



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Iona is part of the District's Senior Service Network— Supported by the D.C. Department of Aging and Community Living



IONA SENIOR SERVICES

4125 Albemarle Street NW
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Together, we transformed 4,039 lives in 2020.

THANK YOU!



Mission

Iona supports people as they experience the challenges and opportunities of aging. We educate, advocate, and provide community-based programs and services to help people age well and live well.

Vision

We envision a community that celebrates, values, respects, and protects the contributions and possibilities of every individual.



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