

Broome County Office for Aging

... bringing seniors and services together



Annual Report 2020

Broome County Office for Aging

AGENCY MISSION

The mission of the Broome County Office for Aging is to improve and enrich the quality of life for all older persons in Broome County.

The Office for Aging:

- ✓ Promotes the dignity and independence of the older person.
- ✓ Ensures that comprehensive and coordinated services are brought to bear on the needs of older persons.
- ✓ Fosters public awareness of the value and contribution of older persons to the community.



State of New York County of Broome Government Offices

Office for Aging

Jason T. Garnar, County Executive · Lisa M. Schuhle, Director

A Message from the Director

The 2020 Annual Report details the many ways the Office for Aging served our senior community last year during one of the most difficult years in the agency's history.

During 2020, the Office for Aging addressed the challenges of the pandemic head on and continued to provide services and benefits for 14,811 individuals.

Central to this effort are the NY Connects Program and the Information and Assistance Phone Line. Together these programs had over 26,185 contacts with people in the community. The main requests for information were focused on pandemic related information and assistance, along with common issues related to financial, health insurance, home health care, caregiver, and transportation issues.

Our nutrition program provided 250,397 meals through local senior centers and meals to homebound individuals. Over 32,000 hours of personal care helped individuals remain safely in their homes. Throughout this report we provide more details on what these numbers mean and the positive impacts the office had on seniors and caregivers in 2020.

In addition to pandemic related work, the Office for Aging submitted and received approval from AARP for Broome County to be an Age Friendly Community. The AgeOn Fund of Broome County, Inc. was founded as a charity to support the work of the Office for Aging and residents age sixty plus in the community.

The accomplishments of the Office for Aging are the result of the work of our dedicated staff, committed contract agencies and community partners, and the enthusiasm of numerous volunteers.

I invite you to see the accomplishments and highlights the office achieved and how we continued our mission of improving and enriching the quality of life for all older persons in Broome County.

Sincerely,

Lisa Schuhle
Director

2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping You Informed, Healthy and Connected

COVID-19: Adjusting Methods for Service Delivery During the Pandemic – Through partnerships in the community and an experienced, dedicated staff and volunteers the Office for Aging was able to meet the many challenges of 2020. The Office for Aging continued to support Broome County’s older adults by modifying its services to meet existing and pandemic related needs. The following highlights provide an overview of how essential services and information were provided in one of the most challenging year we have experienced.

Meals on Wheels – Home Delivered Meals (HDM) Program – During the first three months of the pandemic, the demand for home delivered meals increased by 70%. To limit potential exposure of clients, staff and volunteers to COVID, the HDM Program cut back on the number of days hot meals were delivered to clients. Starting on March 23, 2020, clients received meals three days a week, with shelf stable food or frozen meals provided for the days without meal delivery. Volunteers and staff over the age of 70 were encouraged to stay home, due to the enacted Matilda’s Law. Many of our Meals on Wheels volunteers were in this age group and over 230 volunteers were no longer available to deliver meals. To address the sudden lack of volunteers, Office for Aging reached out to other county departments and community partners to request assistance with delivering meals. The response was immediate and substantial and the MOW program was able to continue with the meal delivery and in person safety checks.



Target employee designated Meals on Wheels of Broome County to receive a gift card to support the service.

The Office for Aging gradually returned to delivering meals five days a week in July, thereby restoring daily safety checks on clients. As the community began to reopen the demand for the in-home meals returned to a more reasonable level. By the end of 2020 there was a 27% increase in the number of meals delivered compared to 2019. The number of clients served increased by 17%.



Meals on Wheels Delivery.

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Meals to go distribution at local senior center.

Broome County Senior Centers & Congregate Meals Program

All senior centers in Broome County were closed to the public on March 17, 2020. Senior center staff continued to monitor participants’ well-being by making regular telephone reassurance and safety calls. Senior center staff also continued to distribute meals through a curbside meals to-go program that was initiated to replace the former congregate meal program. Older adults who came to the senior center every day pre-pandemic could have meals delivered to them or, if able, drive by the senior center and pick up their meals. During cold weather months, outside shelters were installed which enabled us to continue the curbside meals.

Virtual Programs –To keep older adults engaged and connected several virtual programs were launched including senior center and Yesteryears Adult Day Program activities. Online programs and activities included: exercise classes, chat groups, sing-along and other creative programming.



Mask distribution at local senior centers.

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Support for Caregivers – Just as senior center classes and activities had to be shifted to an online model, the same was true of Caregiver Services. Caregivers continued to receive support through caregiver counseling provided over the phone as well as informative monthly presentations and chat groups provided online. In 2020 Caregiver Services had an increase of 19% in unduplicated caregivers served. As caregivers struggled to care for family members, there was a 42% increase in caregiver counseling due to the stress and services needed related to the pandemic.

Expanding Transportation Options – The Office for Aging Mini-Bus continued to operate during the pandemic but limited the number of riders to two per bus at one time. The Office for Aging Shopper Bus service, available to residents at several senior housing buildings, was cancelled in mid-March. This was done to keep riders safe, as social distancing and limiting ridership to two clients per bus was not possible for this service. Senior housing residents were instead encouraged to make individual reservations for the Office for Aging Mini Bus/BC Lift or to call Office for Aging to explore ways to access essential supplies.

To meet the demand for safe transportation, Office for Aging contracted with Rural Health Network's Getthere Mobility Management Program. This contract specifically focused on supplementing public transportation during COVID-19. The contract also addressed transportation needs of those who reside in the traditionally underserved rural areas of Broome County. Through this partnership, Getthere expanded their existing model that utilizes a dedicated taxi vehicle for those in need of transportation in the Windsor area. This model provides a much needed rural-to-rural transportation option.

Shopper Service Program – Faith in Action, a volunteer service group with the Broome County Council of Churches and Office for Aging's contractor for the Shopper Program started an online grocery shopping program to keep older adults and volunteers safe. Staff was trained on how to purchase groceries online, with volunteers in the program picking up and delivering orders to clients' homes. Though the Shopper Program has always been a vital support to older adults in the community, it was more important than ever during the pandemic when the demand increased by close to 50%.

Social Adult Daycare Program (ADC) – Both ADC locations (Binghamton and Endwell) were closed to the public on March 16, 2020. Since then, Adult Daycare staff checked in on clients and their caregivers through weekly telephone calls. In late July, staff began offering online activities to ADC clients to keep them socially engaged. By August limited in-person programming resumed at the Endwell location. COVID restrictions limited the number of clients we were able to serve.

Information & Assistance and NY Connects – The Staff had to shift gears and work remotely. Call volume increased substantially, with the bulk of requests involving basic needs like toilet paper, food, masks, cleaning supplies, adult incontinence products, etc. Caseworkers helped deliver these products to people in need. Masks were made available for curbside pick-up at senior centers and mailed to homebound individuals. A COVID-19 resource directory was developed to help the staff and community keep up to date about services and assistance related to the pandemic. This directory was posted on the Office for Aging website and was updated with new information as needed. When the county building reopened to the public in July many staff returned to start to service people for walk in appointments.

In-Home Services – During the COVID-19 pandemic, caseworkers in the In-Home Services Unit began conducting assessments and reauthorizations for services by phone instead of in-person. Care plans were revised based on new client circumstances, and encrypted technology supported communication with home care agencies. Many home care services stayed in place; however, about 15-20% of clients put their services on hold as a safety precaution. While agencies continued to send aides to clients, they did not conduct many nursing visits in the home. Instead these visits were done over the phone. The Broome County Emergency Operations Center supported all home care and Consumer Directed providers through bi-weekly ordering of personal protective equipment (PPE) from various state stockpiles. Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) units were still available, but often required installation by clients or family caregivers, as contractors temporarily suspended in-

2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

person visits/installation. Toward the fall of 2020 we saw an increase in the need for in-home services, but the lack of home health care aides prevented many people from receiving this service when needed. Consumer directed care model shortened the wait time for some clients who were able to hire their friends or family as personal care aides to assist them with their personal care needs.

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the FGP program was temporarily put on hold. When local schools shut down in-person learning in March 2020, FGP volunteers were unable to resume their work at the sites. This limitation continued into the fall of 2020 as schools reopened but did not allow visitors or volunteers in their classrooms. The FGP Program Manager worked with local schools to offer alternative activities that would engage FGP volunteers. Due to the low-income guidelines for this program the AmeriCorps Seniors that is the federal funder continued to allow the Foster Grandparents to receive their stipends throughout the year. In-services and social engagement activities continued throughout the year for the Foster Grandparents.

Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) – Prior to the pandemic, Action for Older Persons, Inc. (AOP) provided in person assistance at their Vestal location to more than 95% of HIICAP clients. During the COVID-19 pandemic, AOP HIICAP staff and volunteers began to provide assistance to clients over the phone. AOP's phones were forwarded to a dedicated staff person who then distributed the calls to appropriate staff and/or made appointments. Office for Aging provided funding to AOP to purchase 12 new laptops for HIICAP volunteers. These laptops allowed volunteers to operate remotely from their homes and keep up with the client volume during open enrollment. In addition to providing remote HIICAP assistance, AOP offered all Medicare seminars online.

Senior Helpers Program – The Senior Helpers Program shut down on March 17, 2020, due to health and safety concerns with older workers being out in the community. COVID-19 safety protocols were developed and mailed to Senior Helpers, and masks were made available to workers and employers upon request. The program resumed operations on June 25, 2020. Once the program reopened, staff were very busy catching up with job orders including job requests for yard work, gardening, painting, home repairs, appliance repair, mover, companion, and personal care services.

Special Nutrition Counseling Services with Rural Health Network – Office for Aging partnered with Rural Health Network to do a special Wholesome Fruit and Prescription Program. This was done over the phone with 21 nutritionally at-risk older adults. The program provided nutrition education and coupons to be used for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Approval of Broome County's Age-Friendly Action Plan – Even with the pandemic in full force the Office for Aging continued to move forward with getting approval from AARP for the Broome Age Friendly Action plan. In the fall of 2020 Broome County was awarded its certificate of being an Age Friendly Community. The work continues today to implement this ambitious plan.

AgeOn Fund of Broome County- This 501c3 charity was established in partnership with the Office for Aging to help meet the unmet needs of the 60 plus population. This fund will work in cooperation with the Office for Aging as a last resort fund to help older adults who struggle with one-time expenses that might prevent them from being able to remain in the community.



*Donna Bates, Broome County
Office for Aging Registered
Dietitian.*

SENIORS IN BROOME COUNTY

The latest 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) published by the Census Bureau estimates that 25.4% of the total Broome County population is 60 years and older. This is an increase from the 2010 Census that provided an actual count and reported that the 60+ population made up 22% of the Broome County population.

TABLE 1: SENIORS SERVED BY OFA COMPARED TO COUNTY POPULATION

AGE	2019 CENSUS ESTIMATES	CLIENTS SERVED BY OFA IN 2020	% OF THE AGE GROUP SERVED
60+	49,096	8,445	17%
75+	17,021	3,836	23%
85+	5,755	1,518	26%

TARGETED POPULATION:

The Office for Aging is federally mandated to assure that certain targeted populations (which have been identified as most likely to need services) receive services in proportion to their presence in the Broome County senior population. The targeted senior populations include women, racial or ethnic minorities, low income individuals (at or below 150% of the federal poverty level) and those with the greatest social need (currently measured by counting those who live alone). Table 2 shows total clients served by OFA in 2020 as well as totals and percentages for clients served in the targeted population categories. Totals and percentages for the targeted population categories represent OFA clients who provided information about their age, gender, live alone and poverty status, race and ethnicity. Table 3 shows the latest 2019 ACS estimates for the 60+ targeted populations.

Data about the “live alone” status is available in Table 4. The 2019 ACS estimates that 40% of all Broome County households have a householder age 60+. Of these 31,777 households, 50.2% are non-family households that consist of a householder living alone or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related. 46.3% of these non-family households have a householder age 60+ who lives alone.

TABLE 2: TARGETED POPULATIONS AGE 60+ SERVED BY OFA IN 2020

TARGETED POPULATIONS	TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS WITH A KNOWN AGE, GENDER, POVERTY, LIVE ALONE, RACE, AND ETHNICITY.	% OF THE TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED
Total served	9,811	100%
Total 60+ served	8,445	86.07%
Women	6,427	65.50%
Low income (below 150% of Federal Poverty Level)	2,158	21.99%
Live alone	3,542	36.10%
White – Not Hispanic	5,743	58.54%
Black/African American	236	2.41%
Native Indian/Native Alaskan	21	0.21%
Asian	48	0.49%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	4	0.03%
Other Race	29	0.30%
2 or More Races	35	0.36%
White-Hispanic	220	2.24%
Race Unknown	3,475	35.42%

TABLE 3: 2019 CENSUS ESTIMATES FOR TARGETED POPULATIONS IN BROOME COUNTY FOR RESIDENTS AGE 60+

BROOME COUNTY 60+ POPULATION	ESTIMATE	PERCENT
Total 60 +	49,096	100%
Women	27,003	54.8%
Low Income for the 60+ population with a known income status (below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level)	8,416	17.7%
White	46,347	94.4%
Black/African American	1,375	2.8%
Native Indian/Native Alaskan	49	0.1%
Asian	1080	2.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%
Some Other Race	49	0.1%
Two or More Races	196	0.4%
Hispanic or Latino	589	1.2%

2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates

TABLE 4: DATA ON HOUSEHOLDS WITH A PERSON AGE 60+

HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES	ESTIMATE	PERCENT
Households with a Householder age 60+	31,777	100%
Non-Family Households	15,952	50.2%
Householders Living Alone	7,386	46.3%

2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates

TABLE 5: 2020 FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES*

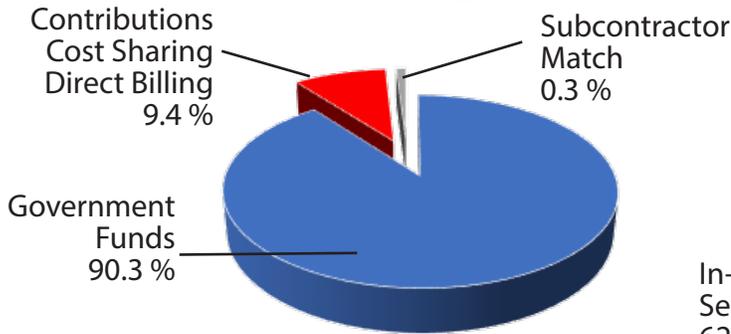
SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD	100% POVERTY	150% POVERTY
1	\$12,760	\$19,140
2	\$17,240	\$25,860
3	\$21,720	\$32,580

**2020 Health and Human Services Guidelines as published in Federal Register.*

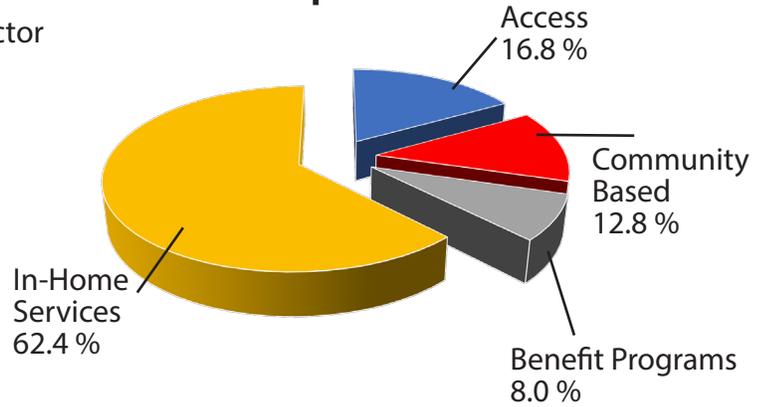
During 2020, the Office for Aging provided services and benefits for 14,811 individuals. This number includes 9,811 individuals who provided consent to be entered in the Office for Aging Client Data System and an estimated 5,000 individuals who received services and didn't provide consent to have their information recorded.

SERVICES PROVIDED

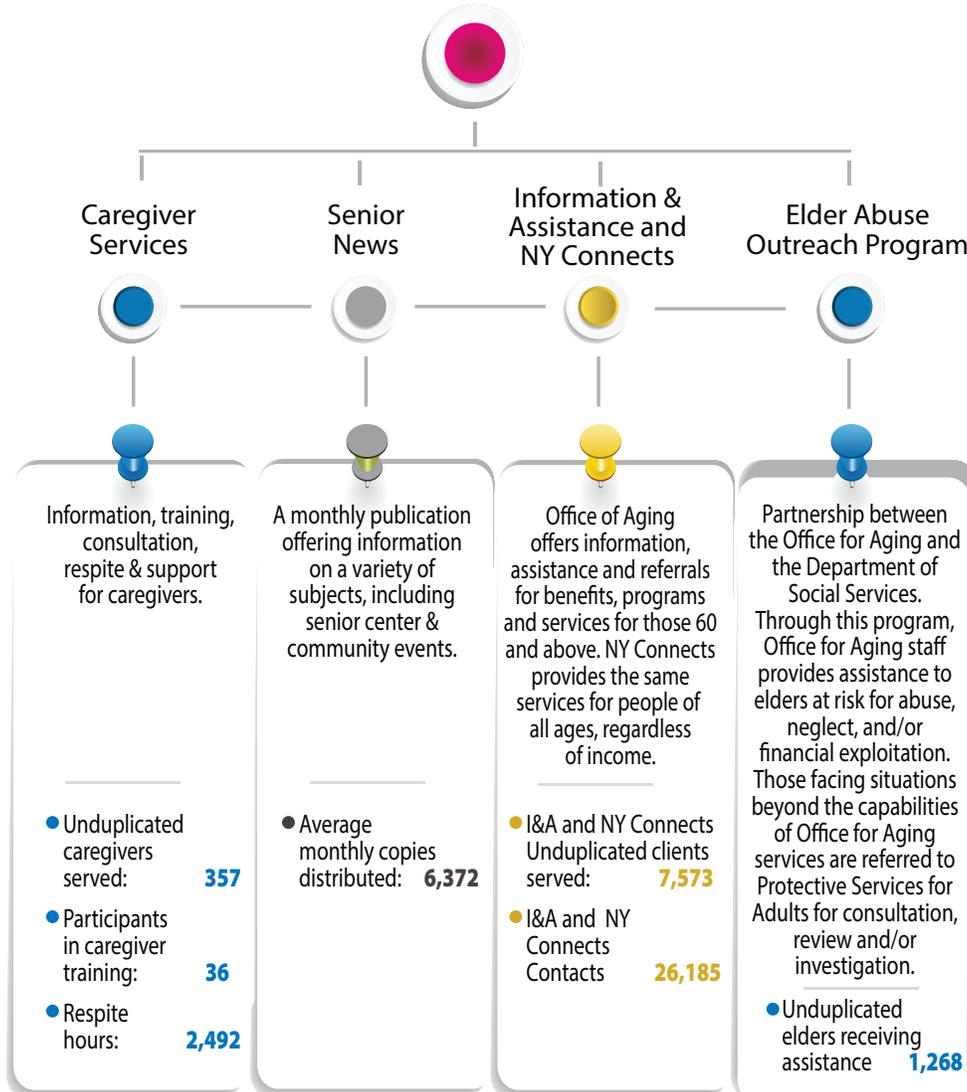
Source of Operating Funds



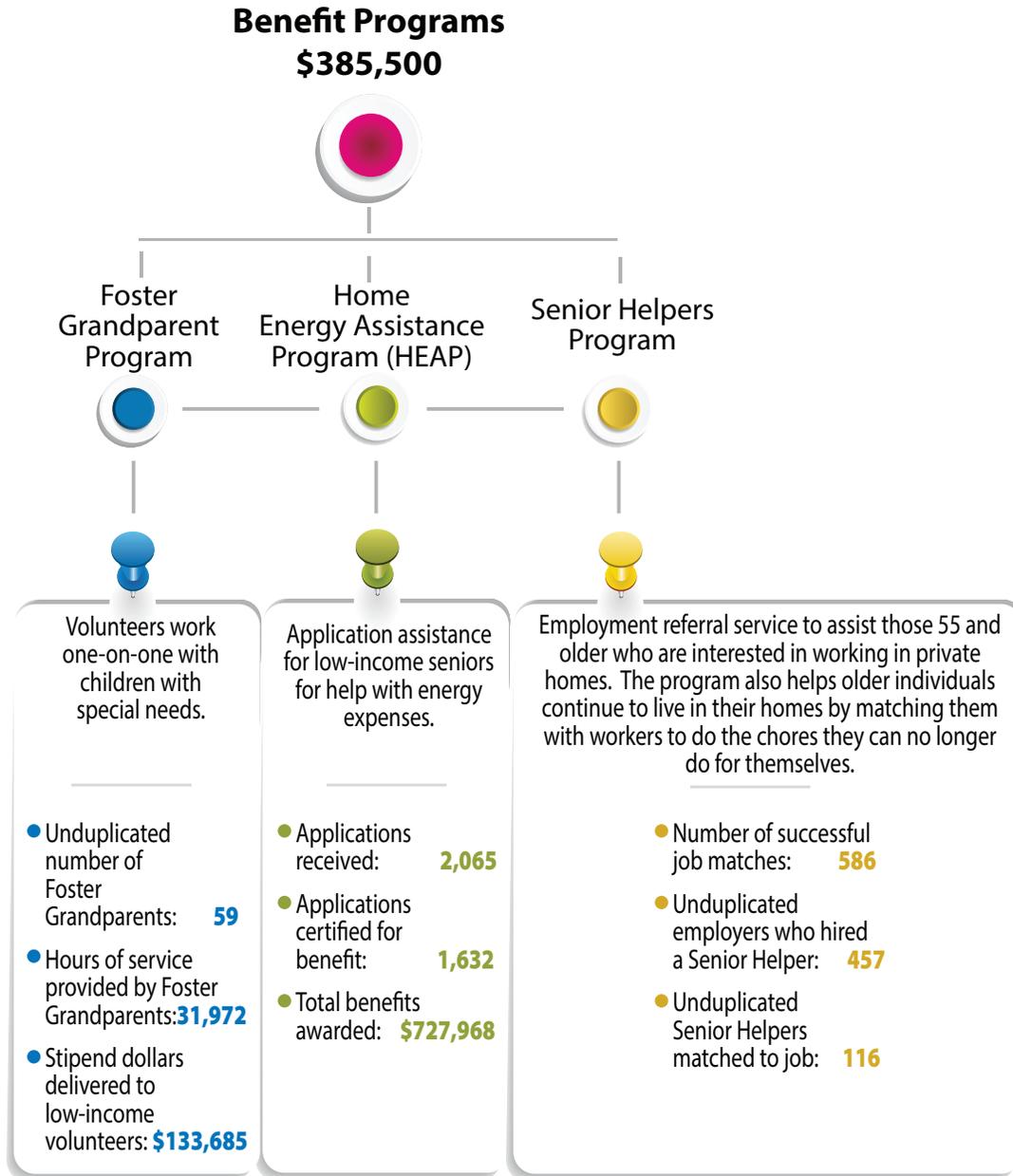
Service Expenditures



Access Programs \$815,755

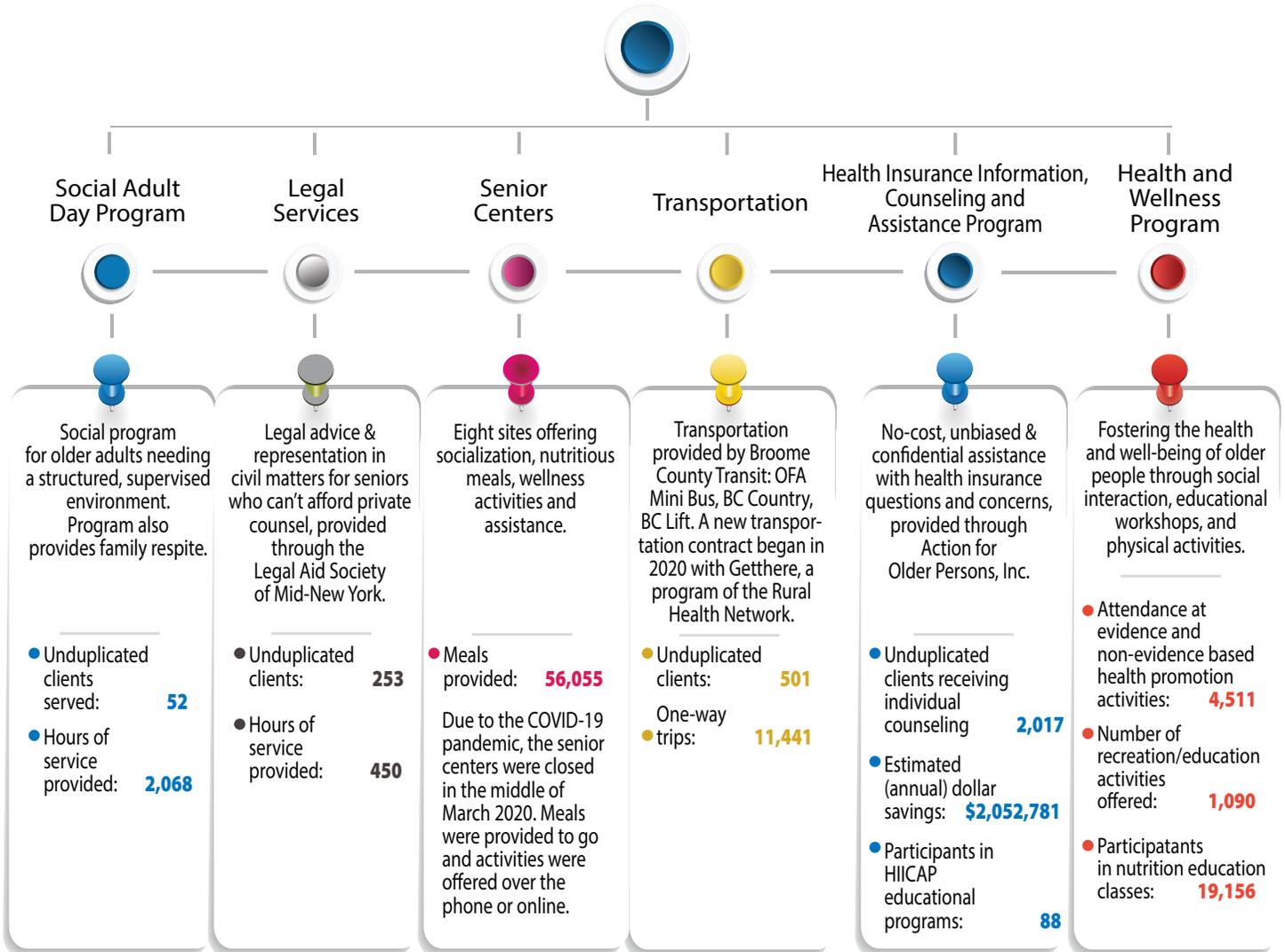


SERVICES PROVIDED



SERVICES PROVIDED

Community Based Services \$620,179



SERVICES PROVIDED

In-Home Services

\$3,018,439



In-home services– in-home assessment of needs, homemaker and personal care services, home delivered meals, shopping and Personal Emergency Response Services (PERS) for the homebound.

- IHS unduplicated clients served: **1,010**
- Personal care and chore hours: **32,953**
- Case management hours: **5,088**
- Home delivered meals - unduplicated clients served: **814**
- Home delivered meals - number of meals provided: **194,381**
- Home delivered meals - average number of clients/day: **420**
- Shopper Program -unduplicated clients served: **55**
- Unduplicated PERS clients served: **151**

VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

The Office for Aging relies on hundreds of volunteers to deliver programs and services to Broome County seniors and caregivers. In 2020 we struggled with having enough volunteers who were able to help during the pandemic. To deal with the volunteer shortage the pandemic created, OFA was able to use other sources of volunteers to deliver meals and services to seniors in the community. Volunteers contributed a total of 78,711 hours in 2020. Some of the categories of service are included below.



A Meals on Wheels volunteer getting ready for a meal delivery.

SENIOR CENTERS: 3,908 HOURS

HOME DELIVERED MEALS: 18,303 HOURS

**TAX COUNSELING FOR THE ELDERLY:
3,420 HOURS**



A Faith in Action shopper volunteer picks up groceries.

**HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION,
COUNSELING, AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:
1,784 HOURS**

YESTERYEARS: 415 HOURS

ADVISORS: 248 HOURS

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS: 168 HOURS

SHOPPING SERVICE: 625 HOURS



Foster Grandparent Volunteers participate in virtual book reading shared with local students.

**FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM:
49,809 HOURS**

CLIENT SATISFACTION

A NOTE FROM A CAREGIVER:

“The Caregiver Corner newsletter was very helpful while caring for my mom until her passing. Thank you.”

FROM A HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CLIENT:

“HEAP is like a godsend. I don’t know what I’d do without it. You guys are fantastic. I just love you and I appreciate all you do.”

DAUGHTER OF A SOCIAL ADULT DAY PROGRAM (YESTERYEARS) PARTICIPANT:

“My mother is so much happier since she started [Yesteryears]. It is also good for me. The program has helped me tremendously. I can’t imagine you not being here for us. I have no words for how wonderful you all are.”

FROM A NUTRITION COUNSELING CLIENT:

“Thanks to this program, I have been able to regulate my diabetes and lose some weight. Thank you so much – helped improve my health so much.”

FROM A MEALS ON WHEELS RECIPIENT:

“I wish to thank all the people who donate their time and energy to help people like me. I live alone – do no drive and my sight is not good – so the Meals on Wheels have been a lifesaver to me. I appreciate it so much. Thank you.”

SENIOR NEWS READER:

“Thank you for producing a publication that I can read. I do not have a fancy cell phone or computer. I don’t have the capability to read things online. Please continue to produce a hard copy newspaper like you do.”

FROM A HIICAP CLIENT:

“The counselor that I was in contact with was terrific. She was patient with me and explained everything so I could understand it. I can now get prescription drugs in my hometown.”

FROM A FOSTER GRANDPARENT:

“I appreciate the ability to do this. It is a lovely program. It’s a learning experience. I love it!”

FROM A TEACHER WORKING WITH A FOSTER GRANDPARENT:

“Grandma knows the expectations of the classroom and is able to provide students with high expectations for their behavior and for their learning. She provides students with educational support, but also with emotional support as well.”

FROM AN I & A/NY CONNECTS CLIENT:

“You are always right on the money with questions I have. Office for Aging is the best kept secret in Broome County.”

FROM AN IN-HOME SERVICES CLIENT:

“I wear my PERS (Personal Emergency Response) button all the time. I know not to take it off. I’m lucky to have it!”

FROM A SENIOR CENTER TAKE-OUT MEAL CLIENT:

“These takeout meals have been invaluable to me. I have been one family member since March, and no one has been in my apartment. Since I began driving to the center, I have enjoyed seeing the entire world come into bloom and then recede into winter mode. A wonderful appreciation of nature. It helped me keep my sanity and positive attitude. I tip my hat to the senior center and your kindly attitude.”

OFFICE FOR AGING MINI-BUS RIDER/GETTHERE TRANSPORTATION:

“Getthere volunteer was exceptional. She was very friendly, and I felt very safe with her when she drove me to my health care specialist”.

FROM A SHOPPER SERVICE CLIENT:

“My niece had been shopping for me but when she was fighting breast cancer herself, she couldn’t do it. [A Shopper Service Volunteer] came to shop for me and that was great. She is lovely.”

FROM A SENIOR HELPERS EMPLOYER:

“Thank you for always being a help to me. Presently I cannot list enough kind words to express my appreciation.”



COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND CONTRACTORS

ACHIEVE

Action for Older Persons, Inc.
AgeOn Fund of Broome County, Inc.
Alzheimer's Association of Central NY
Ascension/Lourdes
Binghamton City School District
Binghamton University
Broome County Central Foods Nutrition Services
Broome County Council of Churches
Broome County Department of Social Services
Broome County Health Department
Broome County Mental Health
Broome County Parks, Recreation and Youth Services
Broome County Planning Department
Broome County Transit
Broome INCLUDES
Broome Metropolitan Transportation Study
Care Compass Network
Catholic Charities of Broome County
Chenango Forks Central School District
City of Binghamton
CST Your Link to Life
Donna Bates, R.D.
Emblem Health
Faith in Action
Family Enrichment Network
Fidelis Care
First Ward Action Council
Food Bank of the Southern Tier
Getthere Mobility Management
Home Instead Senior Care
Homemakers of Broome County (Caregivers)
iCircle Care
Ideal Senior Living Center
Interim Health Care Systems
Johnson City Central School District
Johnson City Senior Community Center
Language Link Interpretation Services
Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York
Maine-Endwell Central School District

Nascentia Health
Northern Broome Cares
NYSEG
Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
Opportunities for Broome, Inc. Head Start
Rural Health Network
Sodexo
Southern Tier Independence Center
Staflings
Stuart S. & Jean H. Wilson Children's Center
Susquehanna Home Health Care Agency
Susquehanna Valley Central School District
Twin Tier Home Care
Union Endicott Central School District
United Health Services
United Methodist Homes
United Way of Broome County
Veterans Services Administration
Visiting Nurse Service of New York
Whitney Point Central School District
Windsor Central School District
Willow Point Nursing Home
YMCA Broome County

● **Broome County Office for Aging
Advisory Council**

Lida Bassler
Don Bowersox
Kathy Bunnell
Rene Conklin
Jo Ann Freer
Sally Hoffman
John Kang
Rick Lacey
Youjung Lee
Linda Mackenzie
Jerome Miklouchich
Mark Odell
Carolyn Price
Angela Riley
Suzanne Sullivan
Sue Thrasher
Jerry Willard

● **Foster Grandparent Advisory Council**

Don Bennett
Peter Fuerst
Deb Kerins
Joan Krissel
Youjung Lee
Bob McDonald
Donna Saker
Carol Schmidt

● **Senior Center Steering Committee**

Ruth Butts
Joan Ebert
Karen Derrick
Virginia Haugen
Leslie Hiemstra
Pat Kolesar
Joyce Kretzer
Mary Maricle
Colleen Mihalko
Fran Pierson
Donna Tangorra
Maria Tangorra
Diane Wickham
Eva Wincek