



LEWIS
COUNTY
NEW YORK

Community Services

2024 Annual Report

Lewis County Community Services
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Message from the Director

2024 was an eventful year for the Lewis County Community Services Department. I joined the team in January and spent much of the year trying to absorb Pat Fralick's knowledge and expertise, in anticipation of her retirement in December. Pat served as the Director of Community Services for almost ten years and worked tirelessly during her tenure to support the transition from county-run services to contracting with local community-based organizations. Her guidance was also instrumental in the development and implementation of the jail medication-assisted treatment program, as well as helping our providers navigate the ever-changing world of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was also during Pat's tenure that Lewis County started receiving opioid settlement funds at both the federal and state level. These funds provide the department with a unique opportunity to support community members and organizations who have and continue to be impacted by the opioid epidemic. After several months of planning, in 2024, the department proudly distributed the first round of opioid settlement funds back into our community through the launch of the Future Stories Fund.

During 2024, the department also worked with our counterparts in Jefferson County, New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) and New York State Office of Addiction Services and Support (OASAS) to support the highly anticipated merger of Credo Community Center and Transitional Living Services of Northern New York. THRIVE Wellness & Recovery (located in the Commons) is now a one-stop-shop for outpatient mental health and substance use services for Lewis County residents!

With the support of the County and OASAS, in 2024, the department restored prevention services in Lewis County. We welcomed Pivot to Lewis County mid-way through the year and greatly appreciate how hard their staff worked to provide our schools with the opportunity to have prevention counselors/educators on their campuses for the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

This year we also worked with the Social Services Department to support the expansion of the Children's Home of Jefferson County (CHJC)'s mental health services to Lewis County. One of their clinicians is now located onsite right here in the Human Services building, two days a week, providing outpatient mental health services to children, adolescents and adults.

In a way, it feels like Lewis County has the most mental health, substance use and developmental disability resources that we've ever had. I know that there is more work to do (especially when it comes to improving access and understanding of the services available), but the collaboration and momentum that I witnessed in 2024 is truly inspiring and gives me hope for what is to come. I am honored to have been selected to serve Lewis County in this role and look forward to working with our partners to continue improving mental health, substance use services and developmental disability programs in our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Platz, MPH
Director

Department Overview

Mission Statement

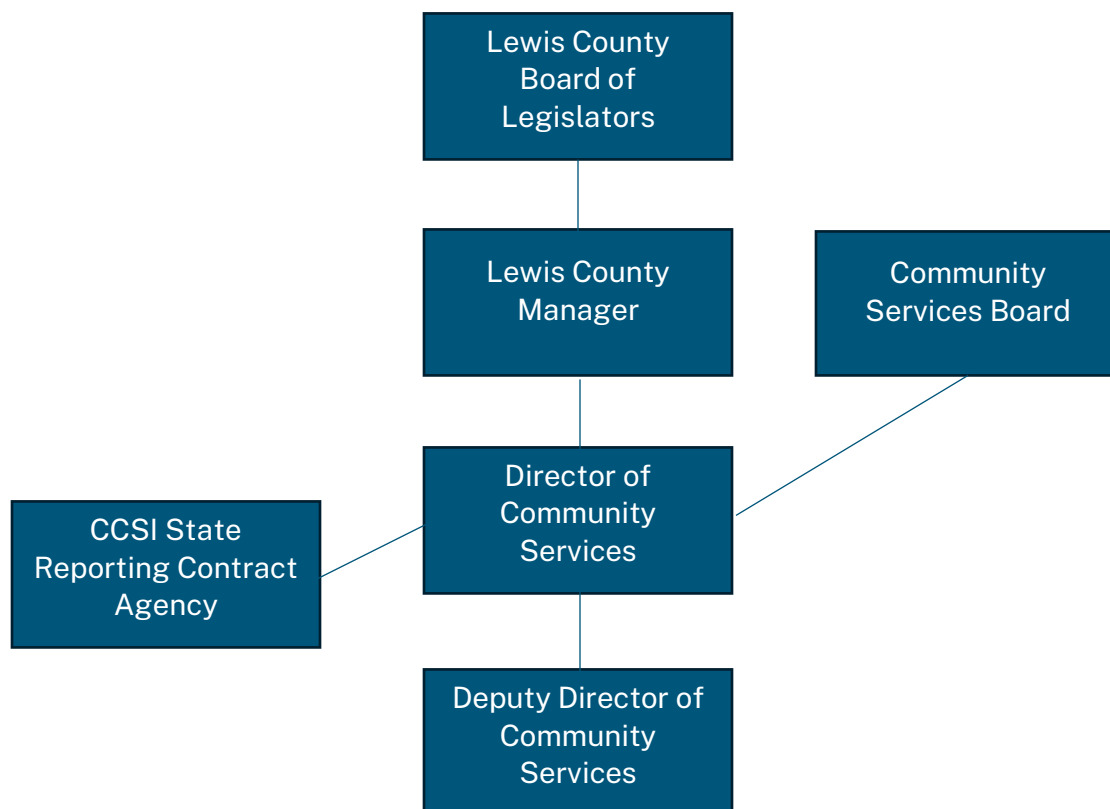
“To serve the community by building a comprehensive array of preventative, treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery mental hygiene services in order to maximize individual functioning, reduce sufferings, and enhance family and community life.” *

*2015 Community Services Board Manual

State Funding

New York State Agency	2024 State Aid	2023 State Aid	2022 State Aid
New York State Office of Mental Health	\$2,152,185.00	\$1,944,566.00	\$1,680,758.00
New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities	\$19,310.00	\$18,777.00	\$21,730.00
New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports	\$390,903.00	\$378,620.00	\$359,817.00

Organizational Chart



Community Services Team

Staff

Patricia Fralick, MBA, CASAC
Director

Anna Platz, MPH
Deputy Director

Community Services Board

Karen Boliver, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (Chair)

Wyatt Wagner, Youth of Lewis County (Vice Chair)

Ashley Waite, Lewis County Public Health

Julie Grau, South Lewis Central School

Rose Larkins, The ARC Oneida Lewis

Mark Waterhouse, THRIVE Wellness & Recovery

Jessica Moser, Lewis County Legislator

Melanie Saber, LCSW

Dr. John Wat, Lewis County Health System

Substance Use Disorder/Mental Health Subcommittee

Mark Waterhouse, THRIVE Wellness & Recovery (Co-Chair)

Ashley Waite, Lewis County Public Health (Co-Chair)

Matt Morrow, Lewis County Probation

Cassie Robbins-Forbus, THRIVE Wellness & Recovery Foundation

Julie Grau, South Lewis Central School

Carla Hellinger, Lewis County Office for the Aging

Amanda Martin, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living

Karen Boliver, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living

Amanda Hosmer, Lewis County Health System

Ashley Wilson, Mental Health Association of Jefferson County

Deanna Edick, Lewis County Department of Social Services

Melanie Saber, LCSW

John Exford, Volunteer Transportation Services

Jessica Moser, Lewis County Legislator

Developmental Disability Subcommittee

Karen Boliver, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (Chair)

Wyatt Wagner, Youth of Lewis County (Co-Chair)

Tina Cummings, Disabled Persons Action Organization

Rose Larkins, The ARC Oneida Lewis Chapter

Dixie Lehmann, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living

Louise Fox, Community Member

Erin Largett, Kelberman

Rebecca Kelly, Lewis County Public Health

Services

The Lewis County Community Services Department oversees the development of the Local Services Plan, Assisted Outpatient Treatment, Single Point of Access, Criminal Procedure Law 730 Evaluations, and other aspects of New York State Mental Hygiene Law. The Department also monitors relevant data.

Local Services Plan

In 2024, the department submitted an annual update to the 2024-2027 Lewis County Local Services Plan. This update included modifications to both the goals and objectives submitted in the original iteration of the plan.

The goals identified in the 2025 (submitted in 2024) update to the 2024-2027 Lewis County Local Services Plan include

1. Work with community partners to develop innovative strategies that address our behavioral healthcare workforce needs
2. Reduce stigma
3. Provide technical assistance and support to prevention-focused coalitions
4. Crisis services
5. Opioid Litigation and Abatement Funds
6. Social Determinants of Health
7. Increase understanding, utilization and access to OPWDD and respite services

Each goal includes several objectives with target completion dates. The objectives that were addressed in 2024 included

- Advocate for a certificate program for direct support care staff at a local college
- Participate in the planning and implementation of the Lewis County Suicide Prevention and UP! Coalition's strategic plans
- Begin initial discussions about what a suicide and/or opioid fatality review team could look like in Lewis County
- Support the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team implementation within the county
As of late 2024, this goal is no longer being pursued
- Identify stakeholders to meet regularly with the purpose of developing a data-informed plan to use the opioid litigation and abatement funds over the course of the funding period
- Build additional capacity in the transportation system for residents with behavioral health concerns
- Support agencies in their pursuit of housing options for residents with behavioral health concerns

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)

In August 1999, the Governor signed Kendra's Law (MHL 9.60), creating statutory framework for court-ordered outpatient treatment to ensure that individuals with mental illness and a history of hospitalizations or violence participate in community-based services appropriate to their needs. Kendra's Law established new mechanisms for identifying individuals who, in view of their treatment history and circumstances, are likely to have difficulty living safely in the community without close monitoring and mandatory participation in treatment.

An alternative to AOT is an Enhanced Service Agreement. An Enhanced Service Agreement is also designed to reduce the need for inpatient hospitalization and assist an individual who has a difficult time following through with recommended services but includes less intensive services than AOT. The Enhanced Service Agreement does not involve the court system.

Year	# of AOT Petitions/Referrals Received	# of AOT Clients Monitored	# of Enhanced Service Agreements
2021	0	1	1
2022	2	1	2
2023	2	1	0
2024	0	1	0

Single Point of Access/Entry (SPOA/E)

The purpose of the Single Point of Access (SPOA)/Single Point of Entry (SPOE) is to provide a forum for improved collaboration among community service providers to identify community-based solutions to address barriers. The Systems of Care Framework (SOC) was incorporated into the regular SPOA process and includes follow-up contacts by the SPOA Coordinator. These follow-up contacts address any other issues that arise and expedite connecting the referred individual(s) within the family unit to additional support services.

In 2024, the Lewis County SPOA/E Coordinator received 98 referrals. Of the 98 total referrals, 57 were housing referrals. Overall, the total number of referrals received has remained relatively stable from 2021- 2024.

Year	Children Referred	Adults Referred	Unique Individuals
2021	31	63	94
2022	36	55	91
2023	34	60	94
2024	27	71	98

Criminal Procedure Law (CPL) Article 730 Evaluations

It is the responsibility of Lewis County Community Services to arrange the court-ordered CPL 730 evaluations. The evaluation is ordered to determine if the individual in question has the capacity to understand the legal proceedings against them. The completed exam reports are sent to the court, and the judge determines if the defendant is fit to stand trial or placed in a forensic hospital for restoration. Restoration is NOT mental health treatment.

Year	730 Evaluations	Average Days Spent in Restoration
2021	1	*
2022	3	*
2023	3	58
2024	1	80

*Data not available

Other Data Monitored

Year	Safe Act Reports	Pick-Up Orders	Fatal Overdoses	Suicides
2021	90	25	1	4
2022	103	30	2	6
2023	76	24	5	1
2024	83	8	0	3

*Source: Lewis County Public Health, Death Certificates

Contract Agencies

Lewis County Community Services is responsible for managing state aid from the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) and Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The state aid is used to support contracts with local service providers who serve their respective populations.

The ARC Oneida Lewis Chapter

Lewis County Community Services contracts with the ARC Oneida Lewis Chapter for Supported Employment services, or the ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are necessary to obtain and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in employment. The goal of supported employment is job placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the individual's employment factors.

Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of new referrals ACCESS-VR	0	0	0	0
Number placed in a job	0	0	0	1
Number currently employed in extended	5	5	5	5

Number job termed	1	1	1	1
Unduplicated number served	5	5	5	5

THRIVE Wellness & Recovery (formerly Credo Community Center and Transitional Living Services of Northern New York)

On July 1, 2024, Credo Community Center (Credo) and Transitional Living Services of Northern New York (TLS) merged into one entity now known as THRIVE Wellness & Recovery. With this merger, Credo (formerly located at 7714 Number Three Road, Lowville, NY 13367) moved their outpatient substance use clinic to the Commons (7550 South State Street, Lowville, NY 13367), where the clinic is now co-located with the outpatient mental health clinic operated by the former TLS.

The integration of the clinics into a centralized location enables THRIVE to provide a higher standard of care, accommodate more patients, and reduce wait times. Furthermore, it allows staff to deliver care more efficiently, streamlining operations, reducing administrative burdens, and allowing them to focus more on person-centered care.

The department continues to contract with THRIVE for community-based services (Transportation, Specialty Mental Health Care Management, Single Point of Access, Health Home Non-Medicaid Care Management, Crisis Intervention, Non-Medicaid Care Coordination, Health Home Care management Service Dollars, Supported Housing Community Services), Jail-Based Services and their outpatient mental health and substance use clinics.

Legacy Credo				
Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Outpatient				
Total number of unique consumers served	180	171	164	149
Total number of unique consumers screened for services	37	46	30	61
Total number of unique consumers who were admitted/agreed to services	26	37	25	47
Lewis County consumers prescribed from THRIVE (includes mental health clients)				151
Total number of services provided	1610	1420	1471	1276
Off Site Services				
Unique consumers served offsite	24	18	22	14
Total offsite services	51	43	81	43
Total Lewis County Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) consumers	20	20	21	23
Jail Services				

Total number of unique consumers served in Lewis County jail	16	22	18	11
Total jail services	103	139	98	42

Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRCIL)

Lewis County Community Services contracts with NRCIL for several services, including Family Peer Support, Advocacy/Support and Transition Management. We also contract with NRCIL for a Psychosocial Club, MICA Network, Recovery Center, Self-Help Program and Outreach.

Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of Consumers Screened for Services	392	439	295	325
Number of Unique Consumers Agreeing to Services	298	273	239	264
Units of Service	7,785	6,664	4,289	5,916

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Council of Jefferson County, Inc. dba Pivot

In June of 2024, Lewis County Community Services contracted with Pivot for prevention services. These services include community prevention focused on preventing or delaying substance use and abuse in individuals, families, and communities, as well as Prevention Counseling in our local schools. When the 2024-2025 school year started, Pivot had full-time prevention counselors/educators embedded in South Lewis and Copenhagen Central Schools, as well as plans to expand into Beaver River Central School at the beginning of 2025.

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Evidence Based Curriculum	Committee for Children's Second Step				
	Number of Students	*	*	*	199
	Total Sessions	*	*	*	108
	Teen Intervene				
	Number of Students	*	*	*	5
	Total Sessions	*	*	*	7
	Too Good for Drugs				
	Number of Students	*	*	*	327
	Total Sessions	*	*	*	166
Other	Drug Education				
	Number of Students	*	*	*	33
	Total Sessions	*	*	*	58

*Prevention programs not up and running yet

Mental Health Association of Jefferson County (MHA)

Lewis County Community Services contracts with MHA for administration of the Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer to Peer Program. The mission of this program is a drop-in, non-clinical, community-based Outreach Center, with staff and trained volunteers providing advocacy, resources, and support with life's circumstances to all Veterans of all eras regardless of discharge status. The program is led by local Veterans who have been trained by the Academy of Peer Services to promote wellness by improving coping skills, reducing concern, and fostering social networking.

Other services provided to Veterans through this program include a Veteran Crisis Response Vehicle, Peer-based emotional support, emergency food pantry/hygiene/clothing supplies, computer, internet and wi-fi, Veteran advocacy and referral to appropriate additional Veteran services and community agencies, and faith-based Veteran clergy/spiritual support. The Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer to Peer program operates two Veteran housing units that can be utilized by local Veterans who do not qualify for housing through other means. In 2024, the organization focused on community outreach and launching their Advisory Board.

Community Services Board

Each county in New York State is required under NYS Mental Hygiene Law to have a Community Services Board (CSB). The primary function of the CSB is to develop and approve the local services plan and advocate for services in Lewis County.

The CSB has separate subcommittees for Substance Use Disorder (SUD), Mental Health (MH) and Developmental Disabilities (DD). Since 2023, members of the SUD and MH Subcommittees have been meeting together.

Substance Use Disorder/Mental Health Subcommittee (SUD/MH Subcommittee)

In 2024, the SUD/MH Subcommittee was charged with developing a plan for utilization of the opioid settlement funds received by Lewis County. The subcommittees decided to create a grant program that targets the opioid crisis in Lewis County and supports local community members dealing with the effects of the opioid epidemic.

To identify priority areas for the grant program, subcommittee members completed a survey where they were asked to use their professional knowledge and expertise to identify gaps and needs that could (or should) be addressed using the opioid settlement funds. In addition to the internal survey of subcommittee members, a survey was developed and distributed to Lewis County residents so they could also make recommendations for the funds and help the subcommittees better understand how the opioid epidemic is impacting our community.

The results of both surveys were used to develop the **Future Stories Fund**, a grant program designed to support organizations/entities of all sizes and origins in combating the effects of the opioid overdose epidemic. The objectives of the Future Stories Funding include:

- Encourage new and innovative solutions to mitigating the opioid overdose epidemic
- Support efforts to discourage or prevent opioid use initiation and the misuse of opioids
- Reduce negative consequences associated with drug use

- Reduce barriers to treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD)
- Provide support/resources for individuals and families dealing with the effects of the opioid crisis

Based on the feedback received through the two surveys, the subcommittees chose to prioritize supporting innovative programs that

1. Support efforts to discourage or prevent opioid use initiation and the misuse of opioids
2. Support people in treatment for and recovery from Opioid Use Disorder and co-occurring substance use/mental health conditions

The following organizations were awarded Future Stories Funds to support upstream strategies that strengthen community institutions and address the mental health needs of young people:

- **Lewis County Youth Bureau** was awarded \$10,000 for implementation of The Screenagers Project, which will provide Lewis County schools with access to films, curriculums and lesson plans that are designed to help youth safely navigate the digital world.
- **Lowville Academy and Central School** was awarded \$11,135 to purchase a universal screener for social-emotional wellness that will proactively identify and provide immediate and actionable support for at-risk students.
- **Copenhagen Central School** was awarded \$20,000 to help families cover the costs of school-based mental health services and train staff in trauma-informed practices.

In addition to the Future Stories Fund awards, Lewis County Community Services dedicated \$90,000 of opioid settlement funds to Bridges Out of Poverty Lewis County for six cohorts of Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World (GA). GA is a 20-session workshop series that provides people motivated to get out of poverty with the tools and support necessary to 'Get Ahead' in today's world. While not exclusive to individuals in recovery from opioid use disorder, GA empowers individuals to build resources for success for themselves and future generations, integrate with the community and take (or regain) control of their lives.

Developmental Disability Subcommittee (DD Subcommittee)

In 2024, the DD Subcommittee focused their discussions on workforce and specifically, the challenges associated with OPWDD's onboarding process. Based on the experiences of a subcommittee member, the subcommittee sent a letter to OPWDD HR describing the challenges he faced during the orientation and onboarding process for the agency as well as several potential solutions for their consideration.

The DD Subcommittee also focused on their assigned goal in the Local Services Plan, which included increasing provider and community understanding of available OPWDD and respite services. These resources have experienced several changes over the years, so the subcommittee took some time to review local resource documents to make sure that the services listed are accurate and brainstormed other potential ways to improve community understanding.

Other Initiatives

The Lewis County Community Services Department is also involved in several other initiatives.

Jail Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Program

Our department works very closely with the Lewis County Jail, THRIVE Wellness & Recovery, NRCIL and Larry Palinski, Family Nurse Practitioner, to ensure that inmates at the Lewis County Jail who suffer from a substance use disorder, receive the appropriate medications.

Systems of Care

Systems of Care (SOC) focuses on children, youth and young adults receiving services from multiple systems. SOC's support the goals of continuity and coordination of services over time and across systems. At the service level, families and youth are active partners in determining services and supports they will access, as well as incorporating the use of natural supports.

"System of Care" is not a program — it is a philosophy.

The Systems of Care Steering Committee received a grant from the Lewis County Youth Bureau to host the 2024 SOC Adult and Youth Summit at Lowville Academy and Central School on November 2, 2024. The theme of the summit was, "It takes a Village: Prevention through Collaboration". Topics covered included internet safety, healthy relationships and risks of smoking and vaping. Presenters for these sessions included Oswegatchie Education Center, Melanie Saber, LCSW, Seaway Valley Prevention Council, Pivot, Planned Parenthood of the North Country, New York, and the Lowville Free Library.

SOC also hosted two community events in partnership with Families Together of the North Country. In October, Staff Orientation Training took place at the Lowville Elks Lodge. 25 agencies provided program and services information to 69 staff from various Lewis County agencies. On December 16, 2024, a holiday event was held at the New Bremen Fire Department. 17 agencies offered many different activities and information for those in attendance.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Mobile Crisis

Lewis County received one-time start-up funds to help support the development of behavioral health mobile crisis services. The department is working with Jefferson County Community Services to develop an RFP for mobile crisis services that will cover both Jefferson and Lewis Counties. Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) will act as the project manager for the development of these services, with the goal of some services being up and running by July 1, 2025.

JUUL Settlement Fund Planning & Distribution

Lewis County, in addition to every other county in New York State, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and the five largest cities in the state, will be receiving settlement funds from JUUL Labs Inc. (JUUL) for its role in the youth vaping epidemic that led to a dangerous rise in underage e-cigarette use nationwide. The settlement funds will be used for evidence-based measures to combat underage vaping and e-cigarette addiction.

Threat Assessment Management (TAM) Team

On May 18, 2022, Governor Hochul signed Executive Order No. 18 (EO 18) entitled, “Preventing and Responding to Domestic Terrorism”. In accordance with EO 18, every New York State County and the City of New York must develop and maintain a domestic terrorism prevention plan to identify and confront threats of domestic terrorism. Part of the plan includes the development of a multi-disciplinary TAM Team, who will work together to identify, assess, and manage threats of targeted violence. While the funding to support the development of a TAM Team was received by Lewis County Emergency Management, the Community Services Department will also have an integral part in team formation and coordination of the services and resources that are available to the individuals participating in concerning behavior.