



Annual Report

2024

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lewis County Office for the Aging is to promote the well-being of the older adults in Lewis County through coordinated services that enhance their independence, dignity, and quality of life.

OFA Staff



Back Row: Steve Virkler (Specialist), Chris Baker (Coordinator of Services), Carla Hellinger (Director), Nancy Wolff (Administrative Assistant), Kurtis Dicob (Meal Program Coordinator), and Adrienne Clark (Principal Account Clerk)

Front Row: Shannon Frappier-Farney (Specialist), Ashley Gibbo (Specialist), Jane Fenton (Office Specialist), and Chris Zehr (Specialist)

2024 Year in Review

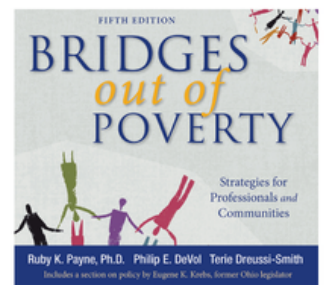
Lewis County Office for the Aging has had an exciting year. In 2024 we celebrated the retirement of Vicki Meyer who served 16 years here at Office for the Aging. Her position was filled by one of our own team members, along with three other vacancies being filled, with one returning to her original position here at OFA. We also celebrated health and the addition of two OFA babies!

This year we opened a Respite Cafe and started a restaurant style dining program with vouchers in West Leyden. We also started a new collaboration with our Transportation Department to offer bus rides to our Lowville congregate meal site. We worked closely with our Emergency Management Department to ensure the safety of those we serve during flooding and inclement weather.

Many trainings were completed by staff, as well as myself this year. Staff completed and became CPR/AED certified. They also became certified in NY Connects Information & Assistance through the Center for Aging and Disability Education & Research with Boston University School of Social Work. I also completed training and am now certified to teach the "Bridges Out of Poverty" program.

It truly has been an honor to serve the older adults of Lewis County in 2024.

- Carla Hellinger, Director



Proclamation celebrating National Caregivers month supported by Board of Legislators



Volunteer Transportation Center (VTC) recognition in Albany

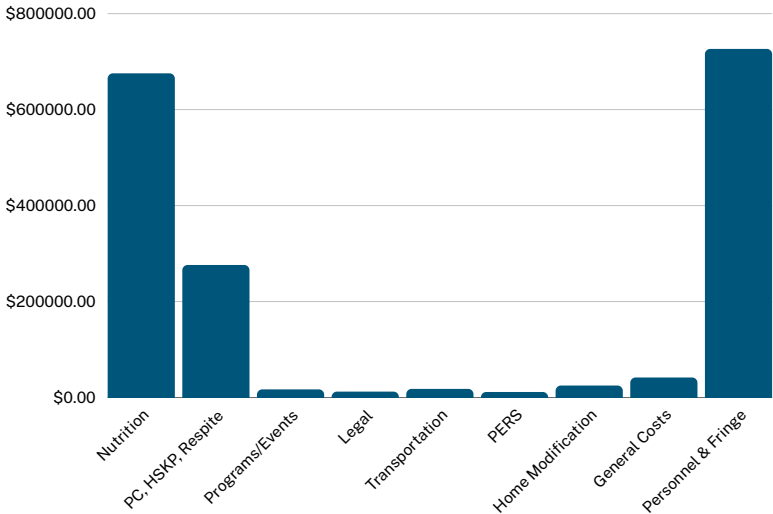


Award presented at the NYS Suicide Prevention Coalition Conference for the postvention work we do with the Lewis County Traumatic Loss Team

Department Expenses

Program

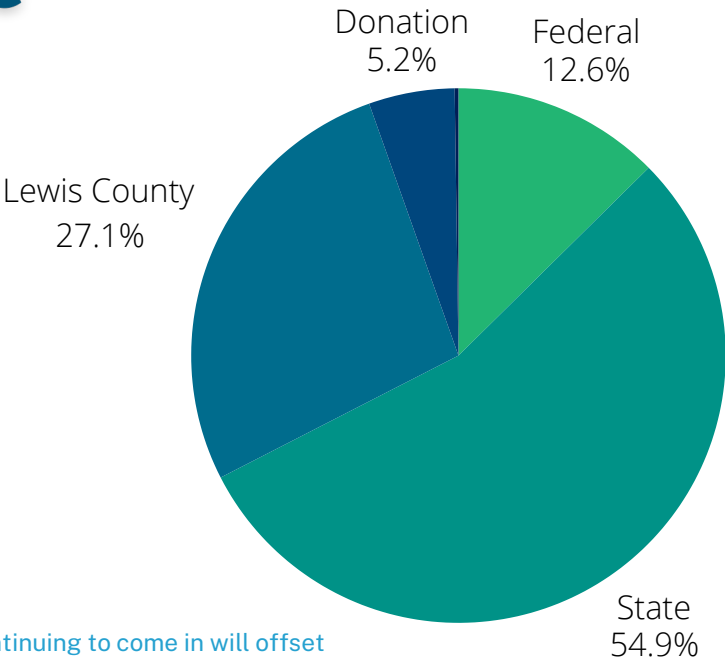
Nutrition	\$675,605.00
Legal	\$12,350.26
Transportation	\$18,000.00
Personal Care, HSKP, Respite	\$276,234.70
Personal Emergency Response System	\$11,568.67
Home Modification	\$25,000.00
Programs & Events	\$16,976.10
TOTAL	\$1,035,734.70
General Costs	\$41,739.76
Personnel & Fringe	\$726,477.23
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,803,951.60



Support & Revenue

The Lewis County Office for the Aging revenue in 2024 was \$1,753,309.40

- Federal \$220,970.00
- State \$961,762.00
- Lewis County \$475,423.00
- Donations \$91,156.23
- Cost Share (<1%) \$3,988.26



Notes:

2024 Federal and State reimbursements that are continuing to come in will offset County percentage for 2025.
State Fiscal Year begins April 1st.

2024 PROGRAMS & SERVICES

NY Connects Program

NY Connects is the trusted place to go for free, unbiased information about long-term care services and supports in Lewis County for people of all ages or with any type of disability. Long-term services and supports include medical and non-medical services a person needs to improve or maintain health and independence. These services may be provided in a nursing home, the individual's home or other community-based settings.

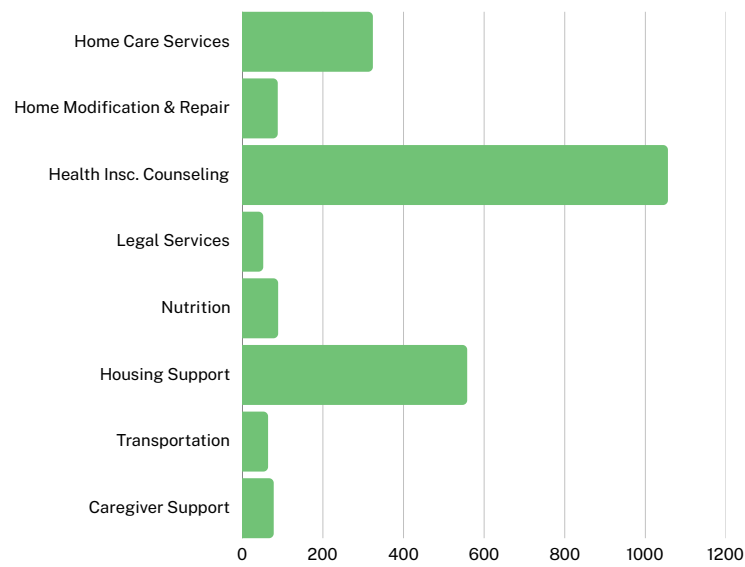
These services may be needed in areas such as:

- assistance with personal care (bathing, dressing, using the toilet)
- mobility and transferring
- support managing cognitive impairments
- maintaining social connections and emotional health

The NY Connects Long-Term Care Council is made up of individuals receiving services, caregivers, healthcare providers, community members, and many agencies that work together to problem solve. The Council assesses needs, identifies gaps in long-term care, and works to improve service delivery.



Most Common Types of Information Requested



2,245 inquiries managed

513 referrals made

147 follow-up phone calls

196 caregivers served

Health Insurance Counseling

Lewis County Office for the Aging provides FREE, confidential, and unbiased health insurance counseling services to all Medicare beneficiaries and their families as part of the Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program (HIICAP). This program is federally funded from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). It is estimated that older adults in Lewis County who had participated in our **Health Insurance Counseling** program saved \$115,894.08 during open enrollment in 2024.

921 people served

258 people seen during Open Enrollment by our two insurance counselors

Transportation Program

This program provides transportation to medical appointments for individuals who do not have Medicaid, family, or friends who are able to provide assistance to them. It also allows them one grocery trip per month. This is done in partnership with Volunteer Transportation Center (VTC) out of Watertown. This year, VTC transported older adults of Lewis County a total of 74,413 miles for doctor appointments and grocery shopping. We served a total of 134 clients.

134 people served

74,413 miles driven



Nutrition Program

NUTRITION SERVICES

This program provides home delivered meals to eligible individuals and community dining to anyone over the age of 60. This year we continued to offer our evening meal comprised of local produce and meat which was offered in the Spring, but discontinued in the Fall. All meals met dietary requirements and were developed with analysis of a Registered Dietician (RD). Clients are also provided with ongoing nutrition education and have access to counseling with our Registered Dietician, Amanda Woolnough, RD.

61,376 meals served
514 people served
24.25 hours of nutrition counseling

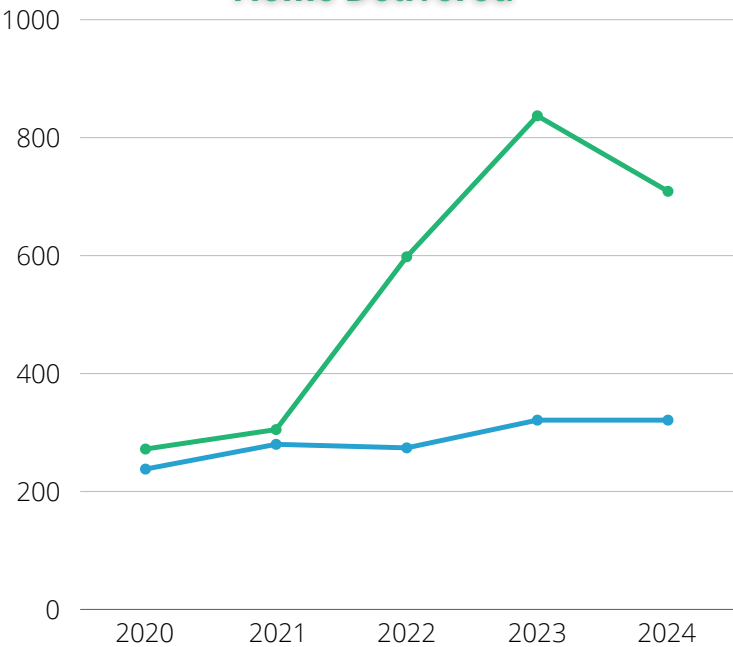
FARMER MARKET COUPONS

Our nutrition program also distributed Farmers Market coupon booklets during the summer of 2024. There were **690** coupons booklets distributed with a value of **\$25** for each booklet. As a direct result of these efforts, **\$17,250** in fresh, local produce was obtained by older adults supporting their health and nutrition while supporting Lewis County farmers!



Clients Served

Community Dining
Home Delivered



2024 DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

- TUESDAY, JULY 2nd** - High Falls Apt. 9:30-10:15 am
Lyons Falls Farmer's Market 11:00-2:00 pm
- WEDNESDAY, JULY 3rd** - Valley View Courts Community Room 10:00-11:30 am
- SATURDAY, JULY 6th** - Lowville Farmer's Market 9:00-12:00 pm
- TUESDAY, JULY 9th** - Port Leyden Fire Department 10:00-11:30 am
Whitton Place Community Room 11:45-12:30 pm
- WEDNESDAY, JULY 10th** - Harrisville Fire Department 10:00-11:00 am
Harris Courts Community Room 11:30-12:30 pm
- TUESDAY, JULY 16th** - Constableville Fire Department 10:00-11:00 am
West Leyden Fire Department 11:30-12:30 pm
The Milk Plant Tavern 12:45-1:30 pm
- WEDNESDAY, JULY 17th** - Copenhagen Fire Department 10:00-11:30am
McNeil Park Apts. Community Room 11:45-12:30pm
- THURSDAY, JULY 18th** - Lowville Fair Grounds (Leroy Nichols Bldg.) 9:00-3:00 pm
- TUESDAY, JULY 23rd** - Croghan Fire Department 10:00-11:00 am
Steepleview Courts 11:30-12:30 pm
- THURSDAY, JULY 25th** - LCGH Farmer's Market 11:00-1:00 pm

Income Eligibility Criteria:
60 years of age or older AND Monthly income is AT or BELOW the federal income guidelines for my household outlined in SFMNP Policy Memorandum #2024-1
\$2,322/month (for a one-person household); or
\$3,152/month (for a two-person household); or
\$3,981/month (for a three-person household)

EACH OLDER ADULT IN THE HOUSEHOLD IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A BOOKLET, BUT THEY MUST MEET THE AGE & INCOME REQUIREMENTS. ONLY ONE BOOKLET/PERSON PER YEAR. YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO RECEIVE THE BOOKLET.



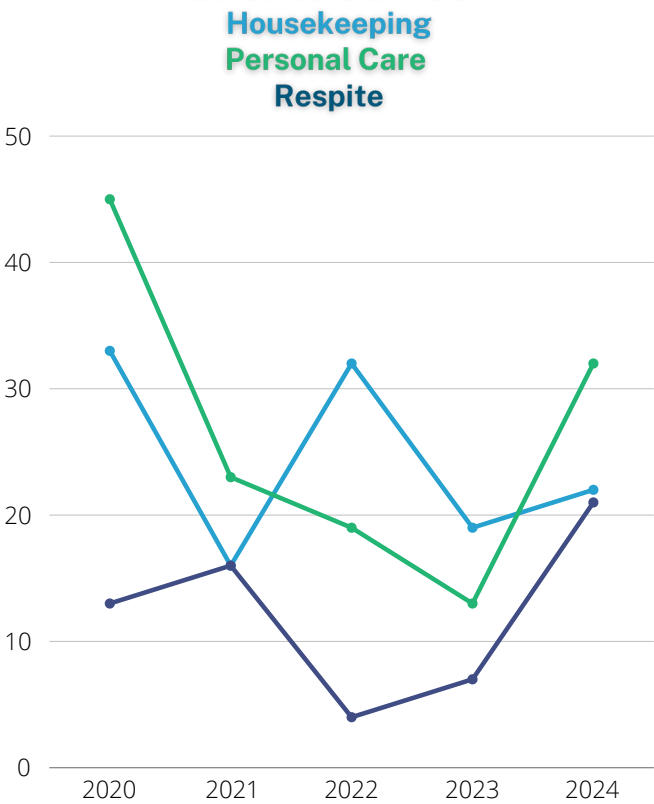
Home Care Services

The ability to provide needed home care services continues to decline due to workforce challenges. People have been going unserved in Lewis County and across the state. We have been making progress bridging the gap in support services. Services that are provided to eligible individuals (not Medicaid eligible) are housekeeping, grocery shopping, meal prep, bathing, dressing, toileting and feeding.

In 2024, thanks to the support of the Lewis County Board of Legislators, LCOFA utilized a new payment and relationship structure with Caregivers (a home care agency with offices in Watertown, Utica, and Buffalo). LCOFA had two full time aides dedicated to our clients who are paid a higher hourly wage. The goal is to eliminate the waiting list for home care services.

8,799 hours of care
46 people served

Clients Served



Health & Wellness Programs

Lewis County Office for the Aging offers a walking class and water aerobics (aquatics) at different locations in Lewis County. This year, the Walk with Ease took place at Brookside and the Aquatics took place at Lowville, Beaver River & South Lewis Schools. These programs are done in partnership with Double Play Community Center. In addition, we did a six-week Health Promotion course through the **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** (CDSMP). This is led by two Lewis County Office for the Aging Specialists. The community is required to call the office to register for any of these programs.

310 people served
23 classes offered

Legal Services

The most common service that our legal program provided in 2024 was the completion of a **Power of Attorney**. Having a power of attorney in place is more important than ever to ensure that long-term care and financial wishes are carried out. Data shows that the second most requested service in 2024 was completion of **Health Care Proxys**.

46 people served

AGE IN PLACE

Home Modification Program

2024

The Age in Place Home Modification Program is a partnership with Lewis County Opportunities and provides assistance in obtaining modifications to their home to assist in accessibility and safety. Modifications could include accessibility ramps, grab bars installed into bathrooms, and a mobility scooter was even provided in 2024. A total of 9 homes received renovations in 2024.



Before



Before



Before



After



After



After



Mobility scooter that was given to a Lowville resident



Grab bar installed into a shower unit



Grab bar installed into another area of a shower unit

Lewis County Office for the Aging is pleased to announce....

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

2nd Wednesday of each month
starting November 13th

Croghan Free Library
9794 State Route 812
Croghan, New York

2:00-3:00pm

This will be an opportunity to listen, share, and gain information about the journeys you are experiencing as a caregiver. All caregivers are welcome!

No need to sign up, just
come with a kind heart,
open mind, and a
listening ear



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term
Services and Supports



**LEWIS
COUNTY**
NEW YORK
OFFICE FOR THE AGING

**For further information,
call Lewis County Office
for the Aging at:**

(315) 376-5313

Healthy Brain



**Screenings for Memory Concerns are Now Available
at the Lewis County Office for the Aging**

Are you 60 years of age and older with questions about your memory?
Changes in memory are most often a normal part of aging can be worrisome.

If you have questions about your or a loved one's memory and live in Lewis County, the Office for the Aging is now offering screenings for memory concerns. If needed, individuals are connected to health care professions for a full evaluation and appropriate treatment.

**For more information
please call the Office for the Aging at
(315) 376-5313**

Recreation and Social Events 2024

Lewis County Office for the Aging offers events and opportunities for socialization that provide community members with the opportunity to make new social connections. OFA hosts events every year such as our Senior Picnic, Puzzle Contest, Healthy Aging Day at the Fair, Fall Fest & Public Hearing, a Holiday movie, as well as a Holiday bus trip. These social events are advertised through our quarterly newsletter and other outlets such as our county-wide Facebook page, OFA website, Linking Lewis County web page, and our local newspapers. Also noteworthy is that the Brantingham Golf Course sponsors a tournament each year and donates a portion of the funds raised to the Office for the Aging.



2024 Older Adult of the Year presented at our Senior Picnic



Seniors Golf Tournament Champion Teams



Puzzle contest participants & winners



Our BINGO callers at the Senior Picnic



Holiday Movie event at Town Hall Theater



Participants at Fall Fest & Public Hearing event



Manning our OFA/NY Connects table at "Healthy Aging Day at the Fair"



Visitors dancing & listening to entertainment at "Healthy Aging Day at the Fair"

Lewis County Office for the Aging launched a new communication service last year through an automated system called “Blooming Health.” This year we have streamlined this service which benefits our older adults in allowing them to receive information and alerts about upcoming events they may have signed up for or alerting them of changes such as cancellations or delays to their home delivered meals. Users to the program can receive alerts via text, phone calls, or emails for FREE. This is another way for our office to communicate with our participants more directly and efficiently.

VOLUNTEERS **HELPING OUT AT OUR OFFICE**

With the busyness of our HEAP and HHCAP season this Fall, we were fortunate to have volunteers come help us out in the office! Mrs. Moshier’s class from LACS would visit every Wednesday for about 1.5-2 hours to help out with general duties in the office such as labeling & folding return envelopes so they are ready to stuff for our contribution letters. Some days they did light cleaning such as vacuuming & washing our windows. Other times they LOVED to do the shredding! The picture to the right shows volunteers with our “companion pets” after learning about this service we offer to our older adults of Lewis County. They were excited to see what all these pets can really do.



RESPIRE CAFE **DOUBLE PLAY COMMUNITY CENTER**

The Respite Cafe is a free weekly program that gives Caregivers a break by giving them a safe space with engaging activities and a nutritious meal for their loved ones to enjoy. The cafe moved locations this year to Double Play Community Center at 6912 Bardo Road in Lowville. The cafe is open on Wednesdays from 10:00am - 2:00pm. There is no cost to attend the Cafe.

NEW THINGS COMING IN **2025**

We are in the works for new things in 2025! We’re moving the Lowville dining site to a new location at Double Play Community Center. We hope to introduce some new transportation options for our older adults in working with Lewis County Public Transportation by creating a “voucher program.” Collaborating with Lewis County Public Health and Cornell Cooperative Extension, we’re looking to begin a Fruits & Vegetables Prescription Program. Internally, we are reorganizing, streamlining, and growing our Volunteer program, and I will become certified to teach Chronic Disease Self- Management classes.

