

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING PUBLIC HEARING ABSTRACT FOR THE 2024-2025 PROGRAM YEAR

INTRODUCTION: The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services (CCOFAS) was established by the county legislature in 1973. According to 2022 Census data(<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US36013-chautauqua-county-ny/>), the population of Chautauqua County is estimated at 126,027 individuals who reside here with 27,726 people or 22% of the population over the age of 60. This is well above the national average of 17% of the population over age 60 years. CCOFAS is responsible for planning, coordinating, funding and advocating for programs and services which meet the needs of Chautauqua County residents aged 60 and over as well as providing information and assistance for individuals with disabilities and caregivers of any age. Services are targeted to individuals with the greatest social and/or economic need, placing emphasis on serving those older adults who are low income, minorities and/or those with disabilities.

CCOFA anticipates our overall budget for 2025 programs and services for older adults and caregivers will be \$5,186,681.00 and we plan to serve 6,500 people in 2025. The budget consists of approximately \$3,409,893.00 in Federal and State funds, \$1,085,588.00 in local share matching dollars and over \$691,200.00 in participant contributions. CCOFAS contracts over 3.3 million dollars to local businesses and not-for-profit organizations who assist in the provision of services to older adults. The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services is regulated by the New York State Office for the Aging and the US Administration on Aging through the Older Americans Act. We also adhere to state and County Purchasing and Procurement rules in determining provider agencies. The purpose of our annual Public Hearing and this document is to present a draft plan for the upcoming year and to obtain input from the community before our final submission is sent to the New York State Office for the Aging. The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services is mandated to provide a list of priority services which the local Area Agency on Aging will address in 2025.

CCOFAS Goals for 2025 include:

1. Further the vision of the Older Americans Act to cultivate innovative approaches reflective of local needs and preferences.
2. Enable older New Yorkers to remain in their own homes with a high quality of life for as long as possible through the provision of home and community-based services, including support for family caregivers.
3. Create an age friendly New York where home and community-based services are available and accessible to those who most need them, when they need them.
4. Ensure the rights of older New Yorkers and prevent their abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
5. Empower older New Yorkers to stay active and healthy through Older Americans Act services and those offered under Medicare.
6. Integrate COVID-19 lessons and adaptations into standard practice while preparing the aging network, and those served by the network, to successfully respond and adapt to future emergencies and disasters.
7. Promote equitable access to older adults in greatest social and economic need throughout all programs and services administered.
8. Support continuation and growth of state and local policy, programs, and investments that compliment and expand upon Older Americans Act programs.
9. Family caregivers will be recognized, assisted, included, supported, and engaged through a variety of programs so that they can care for their care receiver at home for as long as possible.

Please note, this draft plan is still pending final allocations, public recommendations, New York State Office for the Aging, and Chautauqua County Legislative approval. The anticipated amounts below do not correlate to the total amount listed above as the amounts below only include priority areas. Our priority services are as follows:

1. **In-Home/Community Services:** CCOFAS assesses older adults in need of in-home care and then provides case management to ensure the community services chosen to continue to meet the needs of the older adult and their caregivers so they can stay as independent as possible as long as they reside in the community. Case managers also advocate for and coordinate community services options for their older adult clients. Services can include Housekeeping/Chore assistance, Personal Care, Social Adult Day Services, Respite Care(to give a break to the caregiver), Personal Emergency Response systems(PERS), and other services such as home modifications to individuals age 60 and over who are not eligible to receive these benefits through Medicaid or VA. OFA subcontracts with Accredited Care, Aftercare, Caregivers, COI, Consumer Direct Choice, New Vision Services, and Willcare licensed homecare agencies to provide care aides in the home. OFAS also subcontracts with Connect America for PERS, Chautauqua Adult Day Service Inc, Tanglewood, Comfort today, and Chautauqua Home and Rehab Inc for home modification/access services. Everyone in the OFAS homecare programs receives Case Management services from our staff. We plan to serve 800 people in 2025. Of that: \$1,011,730.00 will be spent on aide services. \$142,235.00 will be spent on PERS (** Note: people can privately pay for PERS through the OFAS to get a discount). • \$150,000.00 will be spent on home modifications • \$387,574.00 will be spent on Adult Day & Respite services to serve 85 people/ families. Additional funding realized during the program year may be redirected to in home care services since this service is in the highest demand and there are waiting lists for some types of care. People over 90 years of age and with certain diagnoses may be given priority on the wait list.

In 2025 CCOFAS will spend \$999,192.00 on in-home care needs.

2. **Nutrition and Wellness Services:** The OFAS nutrition program includes home delivered meals, congregate meals, dietitian consultations, nutrition education, and evidence-based wellness programs. Overall, in 2025, OFAS expects to serve 3,400 people in the senior nutrition program and 150 people in our health and wellness programs.

We could not do this without our partners who assist in this endeavor.

- i. Home Delivered Meals: Home delivered meals are specific to individuals who are over 60 years of age, frail and disabled; and have difficulty leaving their home or are unable prepare meals for themselves (as determined by an assessment). The Nutrition and Wellness Coordinator and Registered Dietitian, Carey Skelton, provides monitoring and oversight as well as menu development. UPMC kitchen produce the home delivered meals. Both Dunkirk-Fredonia Meals on Wheels and Jamestown Area Meals on Wheels provide meal delivery services. All these pieces are necessary to provide meals that meet the Older American's Act nutrition standards. Last year we provided 161,788 meals to 1720 people.
- ii. *Waiting Lists: Due to the fund-raising efforts of our Meals on Wheels partners we have never had a waiting list for meals. We would anticipate a waiting list in 2025 with federal budget cuts to nutrition programs. Currently we have a short waiting list which may delay the start of new meal customers 4-6 weeks.
- iii. Congregate Meals: Our congregate meal program is widely known as Dining Out. The program is available to anyone over 60 years of age. The suggested donation is \$5.00. Once registered for this program, older adults are assigned a CHQAging card that can be used at participating locations including UPMC Café, Sinclairville 76ers, Cassadaga ShurFine, Central Station, and Meeders.

- iv. Nutrition Education: Overseen by the Nutrition & Wellness Coordinator. Congregate Meal participants have access to monthly nutrition education with their CHQAging card. Printed materials are sent to home delivered meals clients. SNAP-Ed nutrition workshops series are led by the Wellness Educators at various locations throughout the county. Additionally, nutrition staff contribute monthly articles in the Senior Section of 2 local newspapers.
- v. Nutrition Counseling: Registered Dietitians conduct a phone or zoom meeting with individuals who have dietary concerns and require individualized nutrition counseling to improve or change their diet due to health concerns.
- vi. Health Promotion programs: Our wellness educator will monitor a variety of evidenced based programs throughout the county. Programs could include: Wellness Initiative for Senior Education (W.I.S.E), Powerful Tools for Caregivers, Tai Chi, Tai Chi for Arthritis, Walk with Ease, Moving for Better Balance, Stepping On, and Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. These classes ensure that older adults have the tools for optimal wellness and reduce the needs for more costly medical interventions.

In 2025 CCOFAS will spend \$1,624,784.00 on the senior nutrition program and \$349,819.00 on health and wellness programs.

3. **Caregiver Services**: The OFAS case worker provides education, training and support to caregivers who are caring for an aging parent, spouse or loved one. This program provides counseling, respite, and support groups to help caregivers cope with the stress of this important role, so they don't burn out. There is a specific initiative with Alzheimer's Association of WNY to assist caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias.

In 2025 we to reach 320 caregivers. In 2025 \$127,800.00 will be spent on Caregiver Services

4. **Medicare Insurance Counseling Program**: Our Certified Medicare Counselors provide unbiased information on traditional Medicare, Supplemental plans, Part D, and Medicare Advantage to help you make the choice that fits your needs and lifestyle. Our counselors can also advise you on NYS EPIC and the Medicare Savings which can save you on drug costs and Part B premiums if you qualify. Medicare Counseling is available year-round to help people enrolling in Medicare for the first time, to help change insurance during open enrollment, and anytime you are having difficulty with your Medicare coverage.

In 2025 \$66,482.00 is budgeted for the Medicare Insurance Counseling.

5. **NY Connects Information and Assistance**: We have three trained Information and assistance specialists who man the NY Connects Helpline to answer your questions on all community-based programs available in Chautauqua County. NY Connects will screen and guide you to the service option that meets your situation. NY Connects also acts as the central intake for Meals on Wheels, OFAS and Medicaid Homecare, Chautauqua

County Medical Monitoring and many other programs so you only have to call one number to get services started. Call toll-free (716) 753-4582, 363-4582, or 661-7582.

Last year NY Connects in Chautauqua County took 7,386 calls and we plan to take 7,500 calls in 2025

NY Connects is budgeted at \$448,594.00 for 2025

6. **Legal Assistance:** As a required component under the Older Americans Act, OFA provides legal assistance through our subcontracted provider, Legal Assistance of Western NY (LawNY) to individuals aged 60 and over. Legal issues can include issues such as landlord/tenant issues, housing, utilities, guardianship, foreclosure, abuse, neglect, and age discrimination. Legal assistance is targeted towards older individuals in social and economic need.

OFAS has budgeted \$30,000.00 for legal assistance in 2025 and plans to serve over 135 clients

7. **Transportation:** CHQ Transit contracts with OFAS to provide in-county transportation to medical appointments for people age 60+ (who are not eligible for the same service under Medicaid). CHQ Transit also manages a volunteer program to provide out of county transportation to medical appointments within a 75-mile radius. Due to funding limitations, transportation with OFAS funding is only provided to medical appointments however CHQ Transit offers special discounts for seniors who ride their regular route buses and has special runs for grocery & other shopping.

Cost of one-way trip in county is \$16.00 and we plan to serve 175 people. 2025 budget for transportation is \$65,000.00

8. **Senior Employment & Training:** Though the partnership with the Goodwill- and Senior Services America, grant funds from the Department of Labor, are used for older adults age 55+ who meet income guidelines. The participants are placed in government or not-for-profit agencies where they work a 20-hour work week for minimum wage while gaining valuable work experience and on-the-job training. Many of these work experiences turn into full or part-time regular employment.

Funding and Contributions for Programs: Programs are funded through the US Administration on Aging, New York State Office for the Aging, Chautauqua County, and contributions from subcontracted providers and clients.

No eligible person can be turned away for inability or refusal to contribute to a program or service, except for programs requiring a cost share, and when funds are exhausted. Individuals should consider their personal circumstances before making a program contribution. All contributions are put back into programming to provide additional services to older adults in need. Individuals may contribute anonymously through contributions by check or money order. Contributions will not be tracked. Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services remains strong in its commitment to assisting individuals to remain in their homes and community for as long as they choose and can safely do so with supports. The priority services that are listed above are many of the programs we have in place to achieve this goal.

CCOFAS appreciates any feedback related to this plan. We will take comments through November 30, 2025 for the 2025 Program Plan, however we are interested in hearing about older adult needs throughout the year. You may contact the Chautauqua County Office for the Aging via mail: 7 North Erie Street, Mayville NY 14757; via phone: (716) 753-4471 or via email: CCONYC@co.chautauqua.ny.us. On behalf the staff of the Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services, and our community provider agencies, we thank you for any feedback you can provide to help us in helping our community's older adults to "Excel at Aging Well."