

# Jefferson County Office for the Aging



## Public Hearing

**October 28th, 2025**

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**“Serving Seniors and the Community since 1974”**

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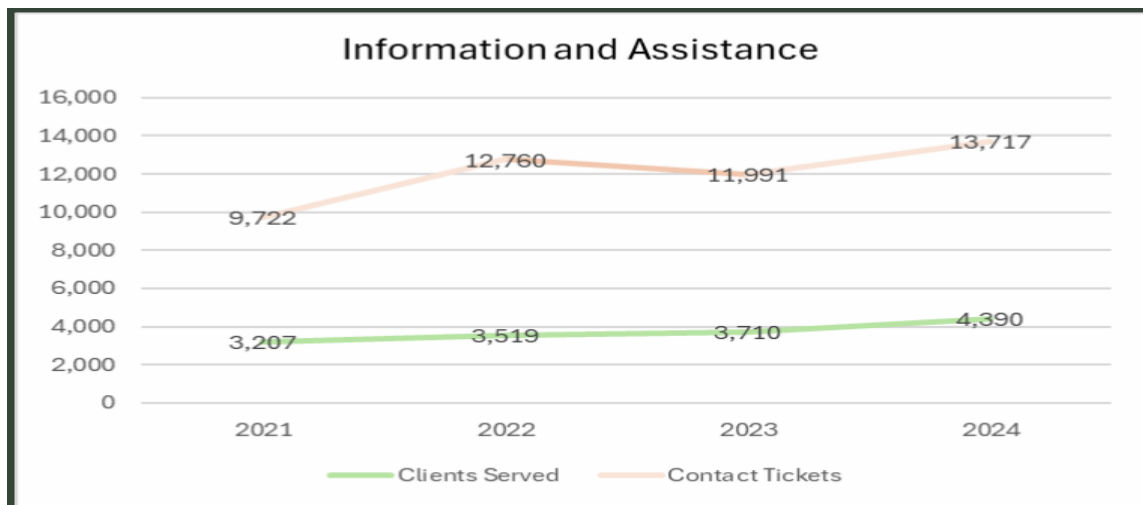
# Mission Statement

The general mission of the OFA is to enhance maximum independence and dignity for all individuals 60 and older capable of self-care in their own home. Our programs and services remove barriers to economic and personal independence by providing a continuum of care for the lower income/frail elderly in Jefferson County. As New York's elder population has grown more diverse, our services also continue to evolve to better serve people of diverse cultures. This also means providing equal access to services for groups historically affected by discrimination and other social and economic factors, including those who have limited English proficiency (LEP).

## OFA Goals

Focus agency activities on the continued development and maintenance of cost effective directly and contracted community services designed to meet the needs and improve the quality of life so seniors can remain independently and safely in their homes and out of Long Term Care institutions by:

- A. Increasing community awareness of OFA services and supports
- B. Increasing the number of older adults receiving information/referrals and the number of seniors receiving direct or contracted services from OFA.
- C. Enhancing the relationship with other community resources servicing seniors and improving referral procedures between agencies.
- D. Efficiently administering all funds allocated to the agency.
- E. Modifying agency service/supports based on community preferences/demand.





# DEMOGRAPHICS FINANCIAL



## BUDGET 2024-2025 (proposed)

Service Category	2025	2026(proposed)
Personnel Services (Salary & Fringes)	744,884	1,372,591
Office Expense	6,000	6,000
Computer Equipment	0	0
Membership & Dues	2,000	2,500
Computer Software Maintenance	525	0
Telephone & Cell Phones	1,800	2,500
Postage	5,000	4,000
Printing	8,000	10,000
Building/Property Rental	32,000	32,000
Utilities	750	0
Mileage & Training	19,325	35,325
Legal Fees	25,000	25,000
Advertising	10,000	10,000
Professional Fees	5,000	2,500
Contracted Home Care	250,000	450,000
Operating Supplies	3,000	2,500
Day Care/Respite Care	80,000	90,000
Contracted Transportation	85,600	85,600
Alterations Home Care Equipment	61,000	100,000
Contracted Meal Prep/Delivery	1,434,288	1,600,000
<b><u>Grand Total</u></b>	<b><u>3,159,301</u></b>	<b><u>3,820,516</u></b>

- The proposed budget has been submitted to the County Administration. The proposed budget will be reviewed and approved in December.
- There was an increase in unmet needs money to address the waiting list from New York State.

# FINANCIAL (CONT)

## GENERAL

Annually, OFA receives Notice of Grant Awards (NGA) from NYS Office for the Aging alerting our office to the amount of budget revenue we will receive. The funds are divided among 15 locally operated programs and have specific guidelines for how the funds are spent. Projected contributions are factored in and Jefferson County provides the balance of the funds required to provide our services.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) recommends that all Offices for the Aging solicit voluntary contributions for provided services.

Contributions help expand services to Jefferson County seniors and are reflected in the annual budget.

**All contributions should be made by check and paid to Jefferson County Treasurer. Mail checks to OFA at 175 Arsenal St., Watertown, NY 13601.**

Those with a self-declared income at or above 185% of the 2025 Federal Poverty Line (\$28,953 for 1 person) are encouraged to contribute at levels based on the actual cost.

## ELIGIBILITY

Program eligibility considers several factors including age, health and finances. The specific eligibility criteria for each program varies.



For example, income is not a factor in determining eligibility for the nutrition program, but the HEAP program has specific income limits.

Generally, OFA clients are 60 or older, have health issues that limit/restrict their activities and have incomes below established limits. For limited programs, clients have to pay a “cost share” based on their income.

**To determine if you may be eligible for a specific OFA benefit, call us at 315-785-3191.**

# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## NUTRITION

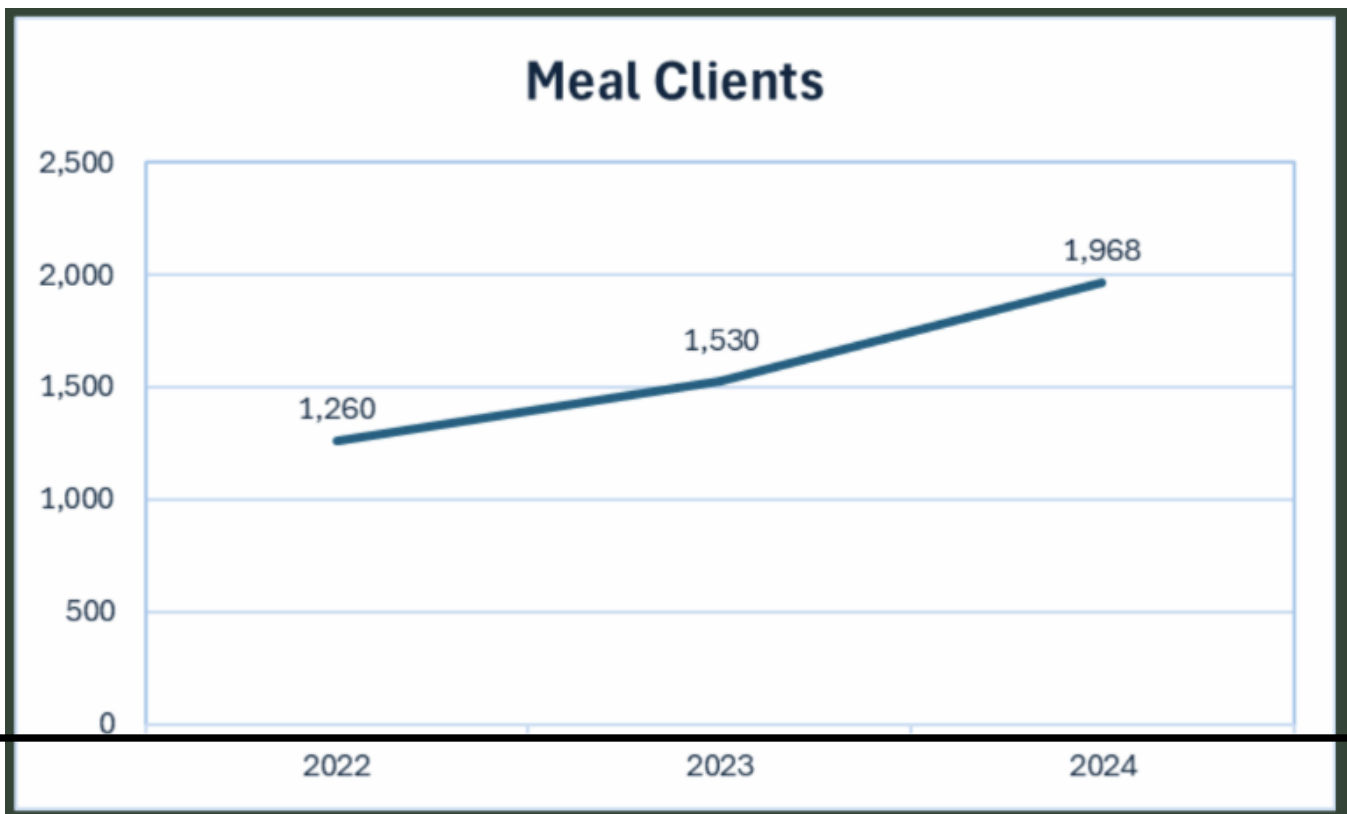
**Goal: The goal of the Nutrition Program is to provide seniors with nutritious meals in their home or at designated meal sites.**

More than one-half of the annual Office for the Aging budget is dedicated to our nutrition program. In the fall of 2003, a decision was made to contract with one provider to manage the food production and delivery in the nutrition program; thus allowing the office to focus on meeting state and federal regulations regarding nutrition as well as freeing resources within the Office to address other direct services.



Currently, Trinity Services Group, Inc. and Brooklyn Kitchen are the providers of nutrition services for the Office for the Aging. All meals are prepared and distributed throughout the County by our providers.

The Office for the Aging utilizes a Registered Dietician (RD) to assist in preparing and analyzing the menu to assure that each meal meets the 1/3 Reference Daily Intake required by Federal regulation. The RD also provides education and individual counseling for both our home delivered and community dining sites. There is no charge for the meals, nutrition education or counseling, but each person is given the opportunity to make a suggested voluntary contribution for meals or nutrition counseling.



## **EXPANDED IN-HOME SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY (EISEP)**

**Goal:** The in-home EISEP service directs resources to keep those individuals, most at risk of losing their self-sufficiency, while aging in place, safely maintained in their homes.

In response to the growing needs of older people, the Older American's Act calls for a range of programs that offer services and opportunities for those at risk of losing their independence. Disabled, frail, and elderly persons can remain in their homes with personal care, housekeeping supportive services, caregiver respite, home delivered meals, community dining sites, residential repair and maintenance, community services and case management. There may be a cost share for these services.

The EISEP Program coordinates services for elderly individuals in need of assistance. A Case Manager visits potential clients and does an assessment to establish a plan with the client to determine the types of service that are beneficial. Seniors can age in their homes and the County and State realize a saving of thousands of dollars a year in institutional long term care costs.



A shortage of aides is complicating service delivery throughout the State.



**NY Connects**  
Your Link to Long Term  
Services and Supports

## **NY CONNECTS FOR LONG TERM CARE**

**Goal: NY Connects provides a single source of information that empowers individuals to make informed choices and to streamline access to long term care services.**

Long term care services include a wide range of in-home, community-based, and institutional services and programs that are designed to help the elderly and individuals with disabilities of all ages. The Office for the Aging and the NY Connects Program provides information and assistance to individuals and their families inquiring about publicly and privately funded long term care options in their communities. A full range of services will be provided to the older adults in need, caregivers and children with disabilities requiring long term care, regardless of payment source.

The NY Connects Program plays an active role in long term care reform through the local Long Term Care Councils. The Councils are charged with identifying gaps in services and supports, duplication and accessibility issues as well as making recommendations for system improvements. **We received over 14,000 calls in 2024.**

## **CAREGIVER PROGRAMS**

**Goal: To provide information about available caregiver services and to help caregivers gain access to these services by:**

- Caregiver training in decision making and problem solving
- Respite care to enable caregivers to be temporarily relieved from their responsibilities
- Supplemental services, as minor home adaptations and personal emergency response systems.
- Individual counseling and support groups
- Look at <https://www.jeffersoncountyny.gov> For additional support information

Caregiving, which is one of the most personal of issues, has become a major public concern. As the population ages, more and more Americans face the challenges of providing care to loved ones who need help because of chronic illness or disability.

Since the vast majority of long-term care is provided informally and privately, at no public cost, recognizing and supporting family caregivers is a central component of any comprehensive long-term care system. By providing in-home services, caregiver training and resources, case management and supportive services, caregivers are better prepared to meet the needs of their loved one.





## **HEALTH INSURANCE COUNSELING**

**Goal: To provide free, accurate and objective information, counseling, assistance and advocacy on Medicare, private health insurance and related coverage plans.**

The Office for the Aging has trained staff and counselors to assist with Medicare, Medicare Supplemental Policies, Medicare Part D and Buy-In programs, Long Term Care Insurance, Medicaid, community and Long-Term-Care medical assistance, the appeals process and regulatory reporting for all insurance issues.

The HIICAP Program has also been responsible for assisting with activities to maximize personal resources in the area of healthcare costs. The application of Federal and State benefits obtained by advocacy from the Medicare Counseling program has insured the continuance of self-sufficiency and eased the burden of local taxes for elderly clients who would normally have become Medicaid recipients.

**The 2025 Medicare open enrollment period is October 15 to December 7. We highly recommended calling to schedule an appointment.**

### **Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS)**

**Goal: Personal Emergency Response System services provide safety in the home ensuring that help is available at the touch of a button.**

PERS services are contracted through Doyle Security Systems and Henry Keep Home. Older vulnerable individuals living alone wear a push button appliance; either a bracelet or a necklace, which when activated puts a call through to an emergency representative for immediate assistance.

This simple but effective service provides additional peace of mind to the individual and their family.

## **HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)**

**Goal: To help our older population remain independent in their own homes by providing funds to offset the household energy costs.**



The Office for the Aging serves as an Alternate Certifying agency for the Home Energy Assistance Program which is a Department of Social Service's program. As a certifying agent, the Office for the Aging is able to accept and process HEAP applications for individuals age 60 and over. Individuals under 60 years of age who receive disability benefits will also be served.

The regular benefit assists low-income individuals with the cost of heating their home. The emergency benefit assists qualifying low-income individuals with a heat related energy emergency who do not have available resources to resolve the emergency.

Additional services may be available from the Department of Social Services related to repair or replacement of direct heating equipment.

### **The 2025 HEAP season opens Friday, November 3rd**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**Goal: To financially support transportation services that enhance the mobility of seniors.**

Transportation services are funded by the Older Americans Act and supported by the Office for the Aging. The Office for the Aging provides financial assistance to the Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc. to provide volunteer transportation throughout the County. This service results in portal-to-portal delivery of persons in need of groceries, pharmaceuticals or medical outpatient treatments.

To help maintain this rural transportation network service, the Office for the Aging also provides the Wilna/Champion Transportation Association with funds for the operation of a wheelchair accessible bus serving their townships and the Paynter Senior Center, in the Town of Clayton, for the operation of a handicapped accessible van enabling older person's access to needed services.



## **HOME MODIFICATION & ASSISTIVE DEVICE PROGRAMS**

**Goal: To improve the safety and mobility of older adults**

As part of the overall goal of maintaining a self-sufficient population of older citizens, funds through this Office are available for permanent minor home repairs and assistive devices.

All individuals must own their homes and meet HEAP guidelines to be eligible for this program.



## **LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

**Goal: To improve the availability of legal services to seniors.**

This program provides contracted legal services to low income individuals with the greatest social and economic needs through the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York. Additional assistance is provided pro bono from the New York State Attorney General's Office.

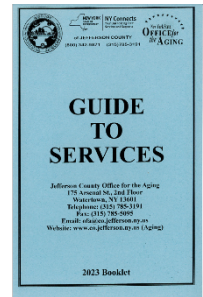


The purpose of this program is to improve the availability of legal services to seniors including representation of issues affecting their rights, entitlements, benefits, financial and elder abuse issues and other matters directly relating to their general welfare and independence. Access to our legal counsel program is available only through Office for the Aging screening. Fee generating cases are not referred.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

**Goal: To provide up to date information relevant to the needs of seniors.**

The Agency distributes copies of the *Guide to Services*, our brochure about the full array of services available for older adults; current eligibility figures for Office for the Aging programs; lists of senior housing, nursing and adult homes, and the location and schedule for congregate meal sites. Various brochures about specific services are also available.



Newsletters are online through the Office for the Aging's website at [www.co.jefferson.ny.us](http://www.co.jefferson.ny.us).

Also check us out on our Jefferson County Office for the Aging's Facebook page!

The Office for the Aging has also implemented a new communications system called Blooming Health. Blooming Health will allow the Office for the Aging to give you updates about programs and services through email, phone calls, and text messages.

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

NY State Office for the Aging directs local Offices for the Aging to establish an Advisory Council to represent the interests of older adults. Council members review and comment on community policies, programs and actions which affect older adults with the intent of assuring maximum coordination and responsiveness to their needs and concerns. The Advisory Council has 14 members and meets quarterly.



## **COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The Office for the Aging is actively engaged in educational presentations on issues pertaining to issues affecting the health and well-being of older adults. Outreach and Wellness programs are held throughout the year at various sites in the county.

## **SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM (SFMNP)**

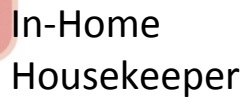
The SFMNP provides fresh produce from local farmer markets and community supported agriculture programs to low income seniors. In 2024, the Office for the Aging distributed 1,260 coupon booklets bringing \$31,500 in to the local economy. The SFMNP is a federal assistance program for individuals 60 and older with a household income not more that 185% of the federal poverty level. The 2025 distribution numbers will be available in October 2026.



## **THE SECRET SANTA PROGRAM**

The Office for the Aging in corporation with Z93 Radio Station Staff coordinates a community-giving program that collects and distributes holiday gifts for seniors residing in nursing facilities. The Secret Santa Program has been enriching the holiday season of local seniors for over 26 years. In 2024, over 520 older Jefferson County adults received holiday gifts.





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## Information and Assistance

2,244

625

800

2,244

102

358

89

12

4

## Notes & Suggestions

**Example: Technology concerns, government benefit help**

[illegible]

<b>2. Are there any changes you'd like to see in existing OFA services?</b>
<b>3. Any other general comments related to future services for seniors:</b>
<b>Example: Senior housing for middle income older adults</b>
<b>THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS!</b>