

Greene County Department of Human Services Annual Report 2020



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Summary

Where to begin? The year started off well enough. However, the expression “Beware of the Ides of March” could not have been more accurate. Sunday March 15th, the County Chairman signed the 2020 Emergency Declaration regarding the pandemic. We were off and running.

The resources of the department, specifically on the aging side, were tested and stretched during this time. COVID took over almost every aspect of our lives. Due to our policies and procedures, assistance from NYSOFA, volunteers and the willingness of all staff to do what was needed to assist the older residents of the county, we were able to maintain our nutrition program the whole year. Unlike many departments, our aging revenue was not hit with a reduction or withholding by New York State. The Youth Bureau however were not informed of our total youth allocation until January of 2021. These funds were subject to the 20% hold. Fortunately this ended up being only 5% when the Office of Children Youth and Families returned 15% of the money held.

We saw a huge increase of 86.75% in the number of people that were in need of home delivered meals. All those that needed meals were served. A few glitches had us close the program but this only amounted to a handful of days. We continued to be vigilant in protecting our senior citizens. We therefore kept our senior center dining rooms closed to the public throughout the remainder of 2020.

Working remotely became the new way to do business in 2020. Access to the office was restricted for the staff and no appointments were held with the public until the final quarter of the year and that was with CDC recommended guidelines. Both the youth and aging workers did the bulk of their work over the phone and through remote computer connections.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) changed the name of our RSVP program to AmeriCorps Seniors. A new logo was designed and is on the front cover. This resulted in no other changes. It is still the same program.

Our monthly newsletter, the Round Table News and our Facebook page were instrumental in getting information to our clients during 2020. It continues to inform seniors and their families about the pandemic, senior scams and center reopening plans.

Structure

The Department of Human Services is comprised of 6 units: Services, NY Connects, Nutrition, Volunteers, Youth Bureau and Administration. We provide a network of services that attempts to meet the needs of our citizens. These are offered through both direct and subcontracted programs. Maximum accessibility is achieved by offering senior services at 6 locations: Acra Community Center, Rivertown Senior Center in Athens, Robert C. Antonelli Center in Catskill, Coxsackie Senior Center, Jewett Municipal Building and the main office in Catskill. Our sites were open from January through March. Once the Emergency Declaration was signed on March 15, our sites were no longer accessible. Despite the closure we were busier than ever.

Normally youth services are offered at the main office as well as in each of the 6 school districts (Cairo-Durham, Catskill, Coxsackie-Athens, Greenville, Hunter-Tannersville, and Windham-Ashland-Jewett). If a Greene County student attends one of the other 5 districts that serve Greene County (Gilboa-Conesville, Margaretville, Onteora, Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk), our staff will meet with them in the surrounding counties of Ulster, Schoharie, Albany and Delaware. COVID -19 changed that. The Youth Service Workers had to work remotely which meant that social media, zoom meetings and phone calls became the tools to connect with students, teachers and their administration.

The department utilizes 29 full time, part time and per diem employees, 1 contracted attorney, 1 contracted Registered Dietician, 1 contracted coordinator and approximately 200 volunteers to provide our services. This is down from 36 employees in 2019. Of the 29 staff, 1 full time and one part time workers are assigned to the Youth Bureau. We are finding that vacancies are difficult to fill due to lack of response to our advertisements. Our greatest need is in our nutrition program, specifically for Part time and Per Diem staff.

We are funded by the Greene County Legislature, NYS Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), NYS Office of Children Youth and Families (OCFS), Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Older Americans Act (OAA) federal funds, grants, contributions and donations.

We operate under the guidance of 2 advisory councils and one policy making board: The Aging Advisory Council, The RSVP Advisory Council and the Children Youth and Community Board. Membership is listed Appendix A.

Demographics

Our citizens in order of total population are White, Black (AA), Hispanic, two or more races, Asian or American Indian and Alaska Native. Over 90% speak English only. Languages other than English spoken at home are Spanish, Indo-European, Asian and Pacific Islander. Approximately 1,411 residents are foreign born. 7.5% of our population speak a language other than English in the home. (Source: American Community Survey)

According to the most recent US Census data, there are 9,063 youth 19 years of age and younger residing in the county with the largest population in the 15-19 year old category. There are slightly more males than females. There are 14,454 seniors 60 years or older with the largest category being the 60-64 age range. This number is slightly larger than the NYSOFA 2020 estimate (14,437) that was cited in the department's 2014 annual report. The majority of the seniors are female except in the 60-64 category with males only slightly higher than females. 3.2% of the 60+ residents are living with their grandchildren and 1.1% are responsible for raising them. 16.3% are veterans, 22.9% have a disability, and 27.8% are still in the workforce. 6.8% receive SNAP benefits, 1.4% are on cash assistance, 79.8% receive Social Security and 10.1% are below the poverty level. Amazingly 2% report that they have no telephone service.

According to the most recent information from NYS Council on Children and Families, Kids' Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse (KWIC) the number of children and youth living below poverty, youth ages birth-17 years is 1,358 which is 18.5%. This is slightly higher than the NYS average of 18.2% but lower than what was reported in 2019. The NYS Department of Education reports that of the students enrolled in Greene County schools, they are predominantly White followed by Hispanic, Multi-racial, Black, Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native. 1% of the students are learning English, 16% have a disability and 1% are classified as homeless. We have a 4% drop out rate, an 88% graduation rate with females graduating at a higher rate than males (91% vs. 86%). Ethnically the graduation rate is highest among Asians (100%), followed by Blacks (90%), Whites (88%) and Hispanics (83%).

Revenue

Aging operates within three fiscal systems: county, state and federal. Aging revenue is separated into dedicated funding streams listed in Appendix B. Two funding years

are noted for those programs that have cross year funding cycles. The Section 18 Transportation funds are not listed in the department funds in Appendix B. They are not specific to our department. These are funds for the Greene County Transit System. New York State Department of Transportation mandates all transportation programs be maintained by a municipality regardless of whether it is an in-house or subcontracted program. The Business Manager has taken on the additional responsibilities of administering these funds for the county.

Our Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) funds are derived from an agreement with Greene County Department of Social Services. We assist seniors in completing their applications. HEAP is also not listed on Appendix B. 2020 brought in \$7,474.49.

Seniors are permitted by law the opportunity to contribute to our programs. There is a cost share component to certain programs that uses a sliding scale fee structure.

We received a \$600 grant from the Athens Community Foundation for programming at the Rivertown Senior Center and we received donations into our Senior Angel fund.

The Youth Bureau operates with county and state funds. The Youth Bureau received \$44,494 from New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

Programs & Services / Aging

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) were established by the 1973 reauthorization of the Older American's Act. Greene County's AAA was established in 1976. We initially were responsible for responding to the needs of our citizens age 60 and older. We are now assisting families, caregivers, professionals and people of all ages or with any type of disability that need assistance in long term services and supports such as home care, transportation and meals. This is done through the NY Connects program. The goal is to help individuals live as independently as possible while meeting their medical, social and functional needs that arise from aging or disability.

We are charged with assessing community needs and developing area plans to address those needs. We coordinate services and supports that help enable older adults live independently in their community. Aging's work is in 5 essential function areas:

1. Empower older adults, families and caregivers to make informed decisions about and access existing health and long-term options including community based services.
2. Enable older adults to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

3. Empower older adults to stay active and healthy.
4. Ensure the rights of and prevent the abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults.
5. Maintain effective and responsible management.

One of the main components of services and supports are the Social Determinants of Health. Social Determinants of Health affect a wide range of health and quality of life outcomes. These include nutrition services, health and wellness, caregiver supports, transportation, health insurance information and legal services. Our services data is listed in Appendix C. It does not however include our Senior Angel program which is listed in the Highlights section.

Due to staffing issues, we had to close our Coxsackie site. We eventually had to close the Catskill site as well. This consolidated three centers into the Athens Rivertown Center. This allowed us to maintain our program. Maintain however is not really what we did. The request for meal delivery exploded. The rules regarding qualification were suspended by NY State. Any senior that normally would eat in the center in a congregate setting was allowed to “take out” the meal. This is normally prohibited. Seniors that were not homebound were allowed to receive a home delivered meal if they felt anxious and afraid of venturing out during the pandemic. Any person under 60 years of age that was classified as disabled was allowed a home delivered meal. This is also something that is normally prohibited. We assisted Greene County Public Health. Individuals that were isolated or quarantined by order of Public Health were provided home delivered meals for the duration of their isolation or quarantine. We modified our delivery system to maintain safe and social distance between volunteer and meal recipient. We utilized the gallons of hand sanitizer in the centers, the office and distributed travel size containers to the volunteers along with gloves and masks. We received the initial shipment of hand sanitizer from our EOC and then later a huge shipment was delivered to us by the Directors of NYSOFA and AgingNY.

The three major annual events facilitated by our department – Senior Day in May, Volunteer Recognition in October and Thanksgiving Dinner in November were cancelled due to COVID. The staff stopped conducting home visits in March, relying on telephone calls to maintain contact. These conversations revealed feelings of loneliness borne out of isolation. The Rotary Club programs noted in the Highlights section helped alleviate some of these feelings. The lack of technology or the ability to use it was a major barrier that did not allow some seniors to connect with the outside world.

Programs & Services /Youth

The function of the Youth Bureau is to assist in the development and implementation of programs and services for children and youth up to 21 years of age. Funding is provided to 501 (c) 3 agencies that guide youth in building on their strengths. Core competencies and life skills are learned. Programs must work in one of 6 life areas. These life areas are: 1. Economic Security, 2. Physical Health, 3. Education, 4. Citizenship/Civil Engagement, 5. Family, 6. Community. These are based on the 8 features of Positive Youth Development that have been established by the National Research Council.

Our subcontractors operate Education, Juvenile Justice, Art, Leadership, Recreation and Youth Development programming. These programs encourage youth to become involved, develop a sense of responsibility, and make a positive contribution to their community. Throughout Greene County, cultural and recreational opportunities are provided to build character and encourage physical, emotional and intellectual growth.

Our direct service and funded programs worked with 1,729 youth. This is a decrease of 2,985 youth over 2019. We funded 12 programs in 2019. Due to COVID, only 8 programs were able to provide a modified program in 2020. The only program that met or exceeded their projected numbers was the Community Development Program/Pre-PINS. See Appendix D for this service data.

Highlights/Aging

- The volunteers – without their assistance we would not have been able to deliver all of the extra meals that were needed. Special thanks to all those that took on this role during their down time especially Legislator Matt Luvera who recruited teachers.
- Our monthly newsletter, The Round Table News, as well as our Facebook page and website helped spread valuable pandemic information to our seniors.
- Our Senior Angel Program once again broke our fundraising goal. Due to COVID our expectations were very low. The committee however raised \$14,364.45. They served 352 individuals during the season. This is 102 more people served than the year before.
- We had the opportunity to team up with the local Rotary Clubs to start the Helping Hands Program. Thanks to the volunteers from the Catskill, Coxsackie-Athens and Greenville Clubs we have been able to assist

seniors with chores. Some of them include: hanging pictures and moving items in a seniors home, taking away garbage and hauling it to the dump, relocating seniors from one residence to another, raking and bagging leaves, and lastly which during COVID seems to be the biggest help, picking up pre-ordered groceries and delivering them to the clients home. 20 seniors were assisted with this program

- Rotary clubs also teamed up with us to create an In Home Contact and Support program. One Rotarian is matched with 3-4 clients. The Rotarian is given a script and a list of names and phone numbers of seniors that are confined to their homes. The volunteer calls the clients on a weekly basis, just to touch base with them. They have a 15-20 minute conversation with the clients to make sure everything is OK. We try to match people in the same area or with similar interests or experiences so that they begin on common ground. We have 9 volunteers reaching out to 22 clients.
- We teamed up with the Cairo Library to deliver books, magazines and puzzles to those at home due to COVID. We served 15 seniors.
- Staff willingness to go above and beyond during COVID especially the kitchen staff who put in a lot of extra hours.

Highlights/Youth

- Collaboration with the Mental Health Association Clubhouse. Due to meetings that identified common areas in the work around juvenile justice diversion as well as drug and alcohol prevention, the staff of the two agencies began working more closely together. This allowed staff to make deeper connections with clubhouse staff and youth, offer community based opportunities for youth and began to develop programming such as an AlaTeen type support group.
- The Youth Service Workers adapted their work as a result of the pandemic and offered a COVID related remote schooling truancy support program to the schools.
- Award winning youth: Sage Murphy, Coxsackie-Athens High School – 2020 Greene County Youth of the Year; Aizlyn O’Connell, Catskill High School – Children, Youth & Community Advisory Board Chairman’s Award and Kane & Killian Schrader, Coxsackie-Athens High School – Greene County Department of Human Services Director’s Award.
- Youth Service Workers pitched in to help deliver meals to seniors.

Challenges/Aging

- Recruiting volunteers.
- Delivering meals to the huge number of new clients.
- We are still having a great deal of difficulty obtaining Personal Care Aides for our clients. This issue has been reported each year since 2015. This is a statewide problem. It is not improving.
- Maintaining operations while staff were COVID positive, quarantined or working remotely.
- COVID and its effect on the seniors as well as the staff.

Challenges/Youth

- Recruiting volunteers to be members of our policy making Children, Youth and Community Advisory Board.
- The lack of funding for programming.
- COVID disruption of in person learning which resulted in an uptick in referrals.
- COVID and its effect on youth, their schooling and the staff.

2020 Goals

1. Using the operational review of the department, reassign job tasks to maximize staff potential and work output.
 - *Job tasks were reassigned.*
2. Conduct more Senior Center recreation and education programming.
 - *COVID put an end to this goal.*
3. Reconvene the county “youth serving departments” on a semi – annual basis to evaluate processes to best serve the youth and families of the community.
 - *COVID put an end to this goal.*
4. Research and apply for youth grant funding.
 - *Staffing during COVID quarantines made this task unmanageable.*

2021 Goals

1. Attempt to normalize operations including reopening the meal sites to in person dining.

2. Update our operational manuals so that in the event of long term absences the work continues with little or no impediments.
3. Reestablishing the Youth Bureau case review support meetings with Greene County Mental Health.
4. Reexamine the 2020 goals.

Appendices

-Appendix A- Aging Advisory Council

Richard Golden - Chair	Coxsackie
Linda Van Etten – Vice Chair	Lexington
Florence Ohle	Community Action of Columbia Greene
Beverly Myers	Greenville
Michelle Deyo	Greene County Veterans Service Agency
Lynn Brunner	Athens
Edward Bloomer	Greene County Legislature
Ernie Amrstead	Catskill
Lawrence Krajeski	Catskill Mountain Housing
Lillian Moore	AmeriCorps Volunteer Representative
Judi Lopresti	Jewett
Dorothy True	Cairo
Dawn Wallant	Common Ground Dispute Resolution

The RSVP Advisory Council

Lillian Moore - Chair	Athens
Liz Jarvis	Athens
Reverend John Capen	Athens
Vicky Cramer	Catskill
Anna Sutherland	Catskill
Carol Voeks	Catskill
Edie Bentley	Catskill
JoEllen Gillooley	Catskill
Janet DelVecchio	Catskill
Penny Rivenburgh	Catskill
Carol Knoth	Leeds
Mary Oettinger	Leeds

Children Youth and Community Board

Pamela Coloton - Chair	Service Provider/HTC School District
Mary Jo Jaeger	General Public/Greene County
Debra Kingman	Greene County Probation Dept.
Larry Krajewski	Service Provider/ Catskill Mtn Housing
John Scalera	General Public
MaryAnn Scalera	General Public/Retired
Angelo Scaturro	Gen. Public/Attorney
Don Smith	General Public/Retired
Terry Ward	Staff-non voting
Ken Brooks	Staff-non voting
Alison Phoenix	General Public
Brenna Rustick	Youth Member
Aizlyn O'Connell	Youth Member
William O'Connor	Youth Member
Penny Martinez	Public Health/ Greene County

Appendix B

GRANT		Grant Year	Grant Amount Awarded
State Funding			
Transportation			
to provide rides for 60+ residents	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 5,600.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 5,600.00	
HIICAP (state and federal funds)			
Health Insurance Information Counselling and Assistance Program	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 33,284.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 33,999.00	
CSE			
Community Services for the Elderly funds support outreach, case assistance, and social adult day care.	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 113,393.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 113,393.00	
WIN (formerly SNAP)			
Wellness in Nutrition funds home delivered and congregate meals.	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 204,348.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 204,348.00	
EISEP			
Expanded In Home Services for the Elderly Program funds in-home aide services and care management for frail and disabled older adults.	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 227,109.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 178,749.00	
State RSVP			
The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) recruits, trains, and places older adult volunteers (age 55+) in a host of community-based human service agencies.	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 6,014.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 689.13	
	7/1/20-6/30/21	\$ 6,368.00	
CSI			
Congregate Services Initiative funds programs and activities at area senior centers	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 1,295.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 1,295.00	
Unmet Need			
Funds can be used to provide services to a client who is on a waiting list or clients that have additional needs that have been identified.	4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 36,494.00	
	4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 36,494.00	

Appendix B

NY Connects		4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 230,867.00
Funds information services for all long-term services and supports regardless of age.		4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 230,867.00
NSIP			
Nutrition Services Incentive Program is for serving meals to individuals 60+		10/1/19-9/30/20	\$ 58,544.70
		10/1/20-9/30/21	No notice of Grant award yet
MIPPA			
Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act helps low-income Medicare beneficiaries apply for programs that make Medicare affordable.		9/30/19-9/30/20	\$ 13,551.00
		Grant Ext UNTIL 9/30/21	\$ 5,343.13
Federal Funding			
Title III-B			
Supportive Services to maintain independence: transportation, information and assistance, home care, legal assistance, case management and activities at senior centers.		1/1/20-12/31/20	\$ 54,492.00
Title III-C1			
Congregate Nutrition Services		1/1/20-12/31/20	\$ 79,248.00
Title III-C2			
Home Delivered Nutrition Services		1/1/20-12/31/20	\$ 41,384.00
Title III-D			
Funds evidence based interventions, health promotion and disease prevention programs		1/1/20-12/31/20	\$ 4,063.00
Title III-E			
National Family Caregiver Support Program was designed to help the family caregiver thorough counseling, support groups, respite and home care.		1/1/20-12/31/20	\$ 28,945.00
Federal RSVP			
Recruits, trains, and places older adult volunteers in a host of community-based human service agencies		4/1/19-3/31/20	\$ 47,500.00
		4/1/20-3/31/21	\$ 47,500.00

Appendix B

CARES ACT Additional Funding

See above for descriptions

HDC2 (Title III-C1)	1/20/20-9/30/21	\$ 12,509.00
FCC3 (Title III-E)	1/20/20-9/30/21	\$ 15,880.00
HDC2 (Title III-C2)	1/20/20-9/30/21	\$ 25,019.00
HDC3 (Title III-C1/C2)	1/20/20-9/30/21	\$ 75,057.00
SSC3 (Title III-B)	1/20/20-9/30/21	\$ 31,140.00
ADRC (NY CONNECT)	1/20/20-9/30/21	\$ 22,928.00

APPENDIX C

*Items are calculated in 15 minutes increments

^The recording of this item changed and were counted as an aggregate unit and not by individual clients

Service Type	2020 Total units	2020 Total unduplicated clients in service type	2019 Total Units	2019 Total Unduplicated Clients in service type	2018 Total Units	2018 Total Unduplicated Clients in service type
Adult Day Services	1,226.5*	3	1,904	6	894	4
Caregiver Services	2,000^	0^	5,304	1,600	1	1
Case Management	928.52	332	1,128	345	1,024	348
Congregate Meals	4,138	196	15,274	569	14,854	352
Health Promotion Services	27^	0^	236	0	4,983	1,600
Home Delivered Meals	92,334	588	55,516	318	56,505	343
In Home Contact & Support	594	164	756	68	1,286	68
Information & Assistance	51.5	47	774.25 *	101	1281.25	359
Legal Services	49	4	53	53	74	58
Nutrition Education	2,887	67	3,661	102	4,406	200
Other Services	25,438	2,541	32,992.5*	2,308	18,976	2,294
Outreach	103	41	516	168	8	5
Personal Care Level I	4,670.25	51	4,052.25	45	1,463.75	25
Personal Care Level II	1,664.5	17	1,864.75	19	2,767	26
PERS	794	75	773	90	935	103
Senior Center Rec & Ed	153^	0^	703	703	657	657
Transportation	4729	212	9,909	207	9,990	292

APPENDIX D

Agency	2020 Award	2020 # of Youth	2019 Award	2019 # of Youth	2018 Award	2018 # of Youth	Life Area
Athens Cultural Art Center, Inc.	\$1,500	41	\$1,500	116	\$1,500	91	Education
Common Ground Dispute Resolution	\$4,500	61	\$7,000	470	\$8,000	568	Citizenship/ Civil Engagement
Cornell Cooperative Extension	\$2,750	340	\$2,750	776	\$2,750	645	Physical Health
Girl Scouts of NENY	\$2,250	234	\$2,250	460	\$2,250	481	Physical Health
Greenville Library	\$500	50	\$1,000	59	\$1,000	62	Family
MHA of Columbia Greene	\$2,600	896	\$2,600	2211	\$2,555	2250	Physical Health
Town of Cairo	\$2,000	26	\$1,500	102	\$1,500	120	Physical Health
GC Youth Bureau - Community Development (PrePINS, Y Develop)	\$19,394	81	\$8,894	140	\$5,000	123	Citizenship/ Civil Engagement
GC Youth Bureau - Administration	\$10,000	N/A	\$10,000	N/A	\$10,000	N/A	Community