

# **Herkimer County Office for the Aging**

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## *The Many Faces of Aging*



*Four-Year Plan: April 2020-March 2024*

## **Introduction**

Older adults are a vital part of our community; they are our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, part of our individual and community family. The older adult population is diverse, ranging from age 60 years to over 100 years, spanning at least 2 generations. Some older adults suffer from serious health issues that restrict their ability to perform activities of daily living such as driving, housekeeping, and even their own personal care. Many of them live alone due to the death of their spouse; this usually results in a loss of income, sometimes a very dramatic income loss that can result in a myriad of aftereffects. Although there are programs available to assist older adults, a number of factors can limit their ability to access these services. Sometimes the services that are available are not adequate to meet their needs.

The mission of the Office for the Aging (OFA) is to provide a range of supportive services to the Herkimer County senior citizen population and their families. The goal is to assist older adults to remain in their homes independently, for as long as possible. Those with the greatest economic and or social needs are given priority.

The philosophy of the OFA includes a strength based approach. This approach focuses on the positive and encourages independence rather than dependence. The focus is on the positive, what an individual can successfully perform, rather than focusing on what the individual can no longer perform successfully. A focus on assets rather than deficits helps keep an individual from developing a negative perspective of themselves and their situation that can lead to depression and further dependence. Older adults are encouraged to maintain as much independence as possible, performing as many tasks as is reasonable and realistic.

This 4-year plan provides an overview of the 60 and older population of Herkimer County, their strengths, the issues they face, and the services available to address those needs. Also included are the activities that the Office for the Aging has developed and will be implementing over the next 4 years.

*NOTE: This Plan is based on a compilation of data and needs assessment work from a variety of sources including the US Census, Community Wide Needs Assessment, client satisfaction surveys, OFA service data, and various internet web sites.*

## ***Plan Approach***

Inherent in our mission and overall goal is a focus on basic needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was used as guidance for the development of this Plan. Basically, Maslow's theory states that humans have several levels of need, and that basic needs must be met before they can move up to the next higher level of need.

According to Maslow, there are 5 levels of need:

1. *Biological needs* – the need for physical comfort and survival.
2. *Safety* – the need for a stable, structured and predictable environment.
3. *Belongingness & love* – the point which turns the individuals' attention away from the maintenance and protection of him/her towards the pleasure of affectionate interaction with friends and family.
4. *Esteem needs* – needs which impel the individual to seek the approval and respect of others and eventually to create his/her own internal fund of self-esteem.
5. *Self-actualization* –“the ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities, and talents, as fulfillment of mission, as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person's intrinsic nature, as an increasing trend toward unity, integration or synergy with the person”. This level is never achieved but rather is a continual growth process.

The Office for the Aging focuses the majority of its energy and resources on Category 1 and 2 levels of need – biological & safety needs but understand that providing support with Category 3, 4 & 5 are essential to providing a holistic approach to aging. Therefore, the more basic needs of food, shelter, personal safety, and health related concerns are the priority and primary focus. There will be crossover among different levels as it will be nearly impossible, and hardly desirable, to separate the levels through the service delivery process. Furthermore, services to family members, friends, and concerned others are included in order to support the older adult in need.

For the purposes of this Plan, Maslow's Hierarchy of Need is broken down into three categories. These three categories are:

### **Category 1: Biological and Safety Needs.**

Economic Security	Food
Housing	Personal Care & Safety (Fall Prevention)
Transportation	Medical/Health Related
Information & Assistance	Legal Services

**Category 2: Belonging and Love**

Recreation

**Category 3: Esteem and Self-Actualization**

Volunteerism

Before examining these three categories of “Biological & Safety”, “Belonging & Love”, and “Esteem & Self-actualization” we will examine the senior population from a demographic perspective.

## **Herkimer County Senior Citizens**

### **Demographics**

“How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?”

— Satchel Paige

*Often, all older people are considered as one homogenous group—the elderly. At other times, for simplicity and convenience, they are categorized into three groups, by age—the young-old, the old-old, and the oldest-old. Such approaches do not realistically reflect what researchers observe about older people: they are the most diverse of all age groups—a multi-generational group ranging in age from 55 to over 100, with extremely varied traits, characteristics, preferences, and needs. Thus, it is hard to define, describe—put a label on—New York’s older adults.*

<http://www.aging.ny.gov/LivableNY/ResourceManual/DemographicAndSocialTrends/12.pdf>; accessed 7/26/2011

According to the 2018 ACS Census estimates, there were 16,761 residents aged 60 and over in Herkimer County; this is 26.8% of the total population of Herkimer County. Our percentage of older adults was higher than the New York State average of 22%.

From a historical perspective, the senior population in Herkimer County has increased from 20% to 26.8% since 1980, while the US senior population went from 16% to 19%.

**Herkimer County Senior Citizen Population**

<b>Herkimer County</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2018</b>
Total Population	66,714	65,797	64,427	64,519	64,442	62,505
Total Senior Population (aged 60 & over)	13,164	14,243	13,781	15,022	15,948	16,761
Percentage of total population (rounded)	20%	22%	21%	23%	25%	26%
Total Aged 85 & over	910	1,157	1,443	1,737	1,809	1,642
Percentage of <b>SENIOR</b> population	6.9%	8.1%	10.5%	11.6%	11.3%	10.5%
<b>Seniors (60+) as a percentage of TOTAL Pop</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2018</b>
United States	16%	17%	15%	18%	19%	22%
New York State	17%	18%	17%	19%	21%	22%
Herkimer County	20%	22%	21%	23%	25%	26%
<b>Total Aged 85+ as percentage of TOTAL Pop</b>						
United States	1.00%	1.20%	1.50%	1.80%	1.90%	1.9%
New York State	1.10%	1.40%	1.60%	2.00%	2.10%	2.2%
Herkimer County	1.40%	1.80%	2.20%	2.70%	2.80%	2.80%

Source: U.S. Census, Statistical File 1 1980-2018  
U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS) 2018

It is readily apparent from the chart above that the population of Herkimer County is getting older. Herkimer County has a high percentage of senior citizens (age 60+). Since 1980, the percentage of seniors increased from 20% of the total County population to 26%. The population of seniors aged 85+ has more than doubled in the last 40 years.

Different areas within Herkimer County have different aging population densities. The Town of Webb has the highest percentage of seniors over the age of 65 years (48%) and the Town of Norway has the lowest (17%) [Population density data is based on the 2018 ACS Five Year Estimate.]

The median age of Herkimer County residents has changed considerably over the last 50 years. The median age declined for a period of twenty years, from 1950 to 1970. During this period the median age dropped from 33.6 in 1950 to 31.1 in 1970. After 1970, the median age began to climb, rising to the (ACS 2018) level of 44 years.

The aging of the baby boomer generation has led to a growing older population within Herkimer County. With the current median age at 44 years, the baby boom population has clearly made its transition from young adulthood to middle age felt. More than half (56%) of the county's population is between the age of 19 and 64. In addition, almost one in six county residents (19%) is

age 65 or older. This is also probably reflective of the loss of manufacturing jobs and plant closures.

According to the 2018 Five Year ACS Data from the Census, Herkimer County ranks #6 in the State of aged 85+ population with 2.7% of the total county population. Montgomery County ranks #1 with 3.2% and Jefferson County ranks lowest with only 1.4%. When compared to other counties in the **United States**, Herkimer County ranks 588 out of the 3,143 counties. This is within the top 20% nationally when measuring the proportion of counties’ population age 85 or older. The Herkimer County population aged 85 and older has more than doubled since 1980, from 910 in 1980 to 1,776 in 2018. The group is much more likely to need of services in order to keep them home and out of a nursing home. The chart on the right outlines the age breakdown of Meals on Wheels clients over time that illustrates this trend.

Age	2010-2011	2014-2015	2018-2019
<60	0%	0%	1%
60-69	8%	12%	15%
70-79	20%	21%	28%
80-84	22%	16%	14%
85+	50%	51%	42%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Care for the elderly very often falls to their adult children who may also have the responsibility for providing care for their own children and/or grandchildren. This phenomenon is often referred to as the “sandwich generation”.

One way to assess the pressure the sandwich generation may experience in caring for elderly parents is the parent support ratio, which is the number of persons age 80 and older per 100 people age 50-64. The higher the ratio, the fewer people age 50-64 are available to help care for those aged 80 plus.

For both the United States and New York State this ratio decreased over the last several years. Based on decennial census data the US and NYS parent support ratio declined considerably from 2000 to 2010. For the US, it dropped from 22 in 2000 to 19 in 2010; in NY, it declined from 23 in 2000 to 21 in 2010. In both cases the ratios remains the same in the 2013 American Communities Five Year Estimates.

For Herkimer County the ratio has declined from 31 in 2000 to 24 in 2010, with a slight rise in the 2013 ACS data to 25. When compared to the other New York State counties in 2013, only four counties (*Montgomery (29)*, *Schenectady (27)*, *Oneida (26)* and *Broome (26)*) have a higher parent support than Herkimer County (25).

The latest data for the parent support ratio was collected in 2015, where Herkimer County ranked in the top 80 counties in the United States. The ratio was last collected at 5.4% (this is the ratio rate per 100 people aged 45-64 to the population of 80+).

Source: [www.ageinplacetech.com/files/aip/stranded\\_Care\\_Ratio\\_Counties\\_20150216\\_o.pdf](http://www.ageinplacetech.com/files/aip/stranded_Care_Ratio_Counties_20150216_o.pdf)

As a result of the elder rich population, our County is presented with unique challenges and opportunities well ahead of the rest of the nation. The areas of Health Care, Elder Care, Poverty and Quality of Life are impacted greatly by this change.

**Living Arrangements:** According to the 2010 Census, 12% of households in all of Herkimer County have an individual over the age of 65 who lives alone. This figure has increased over the years, at 14% in 2018. Projections for the future show this number will continue to increase as the population ages with people are living longer.

<b>Herkimer County Living Arrangements</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2018</b>
Living alone	12%	13%	14%

In the table below “Population Served by OFA”, it displays that from our group of served clients from 2018-2019, 39% of these individuals live alone.

**Population Served by OFA \***

04/01/2018-03/31/2019

a. Total Served		2,967	
		150% Pov Lev	
Low Income**		1,219	41%
Frail/Disabled**		1,009	34%
Age 75- 84**		595	20%
Age 85+**		507	17%
Live Alone**		1,168	39%

\* The Total Served number of 2,967 is understated as many seniors are provided with general information & assistance but we do not gather statistics on them.

\*\* Each of these numbers are also understated because of the reason above and because for many programs we may not gather the data.

## Category I: Biological & Safety Needs

### Economic Security

According to the 2018 ACS 5 year estimate from the Census, approximately 9.7% of senior citizens in our County live at or below the federal poverty level. This translates into a monthly income of <=\$1,012 for a household of one and <=\$1,372 for a household of two people in 2018.

#### Economic Security

Herkimer County Poverty Among Seniors Age 60 & over

	Herkimer County		NY State
	Number	% of pop aged 60+	
Total below poverty level	1,521	9.4%	11.70%

POVERTY LEVELS	Year 2018		Year 2015	
	Annual/ 1 Person	Monthly/ 1 Person	Annual/ 1 Person	Monthly/ 1 Person
<i>Provided for reference</i>				
100% of poverty	\$12,140.00	\$1,012.00	\$11,770.00	\$980.83
150% of poverty	\$18,210.00	\$1,518.00	\$17,655.00	\$1,471.25
200% of poverty	\$24,280.00	\$2,053.00	\$23,540.00	\$1,961.67

Source: 2018 Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) annual income- Federal Register of January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Volume 83, Number 12, pages 2642-2644.

**SNAP (Food Stamps) and HEAP are two programs where documentation of an applicant’s income is required. Because income documentation is required, the statistics for these two programs helps to more clearly paint a picture of the economics of the County population. The statistics below related to the senior population (age 60+) of Herkimer County.**

**SNAP (Food Stamps)**

1,622 individuals age 60 and over are receiving SNAP in Herkimer County. This amounts to approximately **10% of the senior population. The Food Stamp monthly income eligibility levels are listed in the chart below.**

**HEAP 2018-19 Season (OFA processed only; does not include SNAP participants)**

909 HEAP applications were processed; this is approximately **5% of the senior population** had monthly incomes of \$1,518 or less (<=150% of poverty.)

Twenty-one percent (21%) of applicants were aged 85 or older and of this sub-set, 65% live alone and 38% have incomes at or below 150% of poverty.

The SNAP & HEAP populations discussed above are separate populations. The individuals counted in SNAP are different people than those counted in HEAP. With about 10% of seniors on SNAP added to approximately 5% of seniors receiving HEAP there is a total about fifteen percent of the senior population with incomes at or below 150% of poverty.

It should be noted that people must apply for both of these programs. It is unknown how many people may be eligible but, for whatever reason, do not apply.

<b>SNAP Monthly Income Levels (10/1/2018-9/30/2019)</b>	
HH Size	for Seniors
1	\$2,023.00
2	\$2,743.00

<b>HEAP Income Levels for 2018-2019 Season</b>		
HH Size	Tier 1	Tier 2
1	\$ 1,315.00	\$ 2,391.00
2	\$ 1,783.00	\$ 3,127.00

<b>HEAP Applications Processed by OFA</b>	
HEAP Program Years: 2008-2009 to 2018-2019	
HEAP Program Year	Number of Applications Processed
2008-2009	1,714
2009-2010	1,457
2010-2011	1,500
2011-2012	1,482
2013-2014	1,130
2014-2015	1,115
2015-2016	1,011
2016-2017	950
2017-2018	955
2018-2019	909

Please note that the HEAP applications processed by OFA do not include the age 60+ Food Stamp population. SNAP households receive HEAP automatically and do not need to complete an application. Because of this, the number of seniors receiving HEAP on the chart at the left is less than the *total* number of HEAP recipients aged 60 and older.

The drop in the number of HEAP applications processed by the OFA from a peak in 2011-2012 is believed to be reflective of an increase in the number of seniors receiving SNAP.

SNAP cases have continued to increase from 2018-2019. There were 5,189 cases at the end of 2018 compared to 5,379 so far in 2019.

<b>Total 2018-2019 HEAP Applications Processed By OFA Income levels</b>	
<= 100%	10%
101-125%	13%
126-150%	19%
151-185%	24%
>185%	34%
unavailable (denied)	1%
	100%
Herkimer County OFA applications only; does not include Food Stamp recipients receiving HEAP.	

The maximum HEAP Tier 1 monthly income level is approximately 130% of the federal poverty level.

The maximum HEAP Tier 2 monthly income level is approximately 60% of the NYS median income and 235% of the federal poverty level.

Per <http://otda.ny.us/programs/heap/stateplan/2010-2011-state-plan.pdf> accessed 8/3/2011

**OFA Plan Activities:**

- OFA will continue to consider low income seniors a high priority population for OFA services.
- Continue to process HEAP applications for the 60+ population.
- Continue to assist the NOEP (Nutrition Outreach & Education Program) of Catholic Charities of Herkimer County in distributing information to seniors regarding SNAP.
- A representative of the OFA will continue to serve on the Ecumenical Food & Shelter Committee.

## Housing

“The primary goal of all “weatherization” efforts is to modify a home or building to reduce its energy consumption and optimize its energy efficiency. In particular, publicly supported weatherization programs are designed to assist needy householders (including older adults, individuals of all ages with disabilities, and families with children) reduce their energy bills and achieve both economic and environmental savings.”

<http://www.aging.ny.gov/LivableNY/ResourceManual/Design/IV2r.pdf>; accessed 7/26/2011

The median year of construction for year-round homes in Herkimer County is 1953 (2009-2013 ACS 5 Year estimate-Census). Thirty-five percent (35%) of Herkimer County homes were built prior to 1970.

For, the median value of an owner-occupied home in Herkimer County was \$95,800 compared to \$293,200 for New York State. [<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>]

Older housing stock and low income are commonly seen by OFA staff. Vital home repairs (such as roof leaks, etc.) are often neglected and the result is often severe. For example, the OFA receives many referrals from seniors who have leaky roofs and the senior cannot afford to repair or replace the roof. The OFA does not have places to refer them to for the assistance they need. Also seen are seniors who still own their own homes but whose income is so low that when something like a water heater needs to be replaced (\$500-\$850) they cannot afford to replace it.

*“Housing Quality and Stock: Participants said the primary housing need of the Region is the rehabilitation of owner occupied housing. The experience of the Village of Frankfort, Herkimer County was shared where 177 home rehabilitations were recently completed and there remain 150 income-qualified owners looking for assistance.”*

**New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Statewide Affordable Housing Needs Study; MOHAWK VALLEY REGIONAL REPORT. Prepared by the Office of Policy Research and Development; February 2009.**  
<http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/Publications/HousingNeedsStudy/MohawkValley.pdf>; accessed 7/26/2011

The following information comes from Herkimer County’s application for New York State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding (May 2011):

“The following have been identified as critical issues pertaining to seniors:

1. Deterioration of neighborhoods/homes, precluding HUD Housing Quality Standards compliance;
2. Lack of family support systems and personal assets, preventing seniors from maintaining healthy, safe living environments;

3. Risk of premature nursing home placement for seniors unable to maintain their homes;
4. Lack of financial literacy in matters such as credit, refinancing, predatory lending, reverse mortgages, tax escrow, working with reputable contractors, and homeowner's insurance;
5. Lack of knowledge and rural access to resources available to assist with housing issues;
6. Decreased funding for senior programs such as Restore/USDA;
7. Greater demand for senior services due to increasing elderly and Baby Boomer populations.

As part of this CDBG application, a survey was mailed to Herkimer County senior citizen households who received HEAP during the 2010-2011 HEAP season *and* whose household income was at 150% of poverty or less. Other surveys were distributed at public hearings held for the grant application. The results of that survey were as follows: (again from the 2011 Herkimer County CDBG application:

“Of 178 senior households responding, 113 properties, or 63%, met the criteria of being moderately or severely substandard, having at least two or three critical defects. Results regarding specific housing conditions and income qualification include:

- 98% of respondents lived in single-family structures;
- Approximately 98% met HUD low/moderate income guidelines, with 89% falling below the 50% income level. Over 28% of households met HUD's lowest income threshold (under 30%) representing Herkimer County's poorest citizens;
- 63% of respondents represented elderly persons living alone;
- 27% of households had at least one resident with disabilities;
- Most commonly reported housing needs included door/window replacement (53%) and roof replacement (46%), followed by heating/energy efficiency issues and exterior deterioration (37% and 43% respectively). In addition, 24% of senior households reported problems with their home's electrical systems, and 21% indicated well/water/septic issues.

It should be noted that HOC (HomeOwnership Center) historically reports multiple health and safety issues are typically identified upon full house evaluation of senior-owned properties. Their own assessments of their personal properties often fall short of detecting all health and safety deficiencies, any of which can only be evaluated and identified by trained housing rehabilitation professionals.”

Herkimer County has applied for and received 2-year NYS grants (Small Cities, CDBG) in 2005 and 2009; and 2011. After completion of three grant cycles, a waiting list of applicants still exists. Herkimer County completed the CDBG in 2013 and has not applied for another grant due to changes in the states requirements for administering the program. OFA does refer seniors to other municipalities that may have CDBG funding.

The OFA makes referrals to the designated weatherization agency (Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency for weatherization and, when it was available, the RESTORE Program.) Also, Herkimer County has continued to make referrals to EmPower NY and to USDA Rural Development for their grants & low interest loans.

Roof repairs are the one type of home repair that continues to be a glaring deficit for Herkimer County seniors. The high cost of roof reconstruction combined with limited funding leave roof repairs in a void. Some funding is available through USDA and through the HomeOwnership Center.

Another glaring deficit is assistance with health and safety issues such as grab rails, and repairs of steps/ handrails. Some assistance for these safety issues is available through the HomeOwnership Center. Referrals have been made to Rebuilding Mohawk Valley and other volunteer organizations but unfortunately these volunteer agencies are unable keep up with the demand.

Sometimes seniors leave their homes and move into apartments. Apartment living relieves them of housing repairs and maintenance issues such as mowing & snow removal. The OFA maintains a senior housing brochure of local rental units. There are numerous housing facilities for senior &/or disabled populations located throughout Herkimer County. There are waiting lists for some senior housing. Most senior housing facilities currently have waiting lists due to the high demand for senior housing in the area. Some facilities offer efficiency apartments and one-bedroom apartments and the wait list is sometimes comprised of people waiting for a one-bedroom apartment while efficiency apartments are available.

**OFA Plan Activities:**

- Continue to provide information and referrals to senior households for weatherization services.
- Continue to be a secondary certifier for DSS processing HEAP applications to senior households.
- Continue to refer to CDBG programs in Herkimer County.
- Continue to maintain Senior Housing brochure both in print & on web site.
- Continue to make referrals to other programs as appropriate such as EmPower, NYSEDA, Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, HomeOwnership Center, etc.

## **Transportation**

*“I don't know what I would do if we didn't have this ride to get to where we have to go”*  
(From OFA Transportation Client Satisfaction Survey, 2019.)

Many seniors have to give up driving due to vision problems, physical limitations, or the expense of fuel, insurance & repairs. The need for transportation services for seniors is well understood. Transportation has been identified as a need in many local studies and was included as a need in the Risk Assessment Profile. Transportation was also identified as a priority in the Human Service Transportation Coordinated Plan developed by the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study in 2010. The options available to seniors include depending on their family & friends, public transportation including taxi service, or publicly supported services such as OFA, RSVP, or the Community Transportation Service in the Town of Webb.

There is limited public transportation available in Herkimer County which makes getting places much more difficult, especially for seniors. Commuter bus service is provided at many stops between Little Falls and Utica (Oneida County), along the Routes 5 and 5S valley corridor but it requires the physical capability of walking to a bus stop, which is not always an option for seniors. Commercial taxi services are very limited in Herkimer County and can be expensive, especially for someone with a low income.

Several communities and agencies have created small, localized services to help meet the transportation needs of senior citizens. These organizations include the Herkimer County Office for the Aging, the RSVP Program (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), and the Town of Webb Community Transportation Service, a volunteer transportation program. These services are limited and do not meet all the needs of the senior population. The OFA receives many requests for rides that they cannot provide because the demand is so high. RSVP lost many volunteer drivers when the price of gasoline rose and funds were not available to raise the mileage reimbursement. All three organizations face formidable funding challenges.

Transportation for medical appointments outside Herkimer County is often raised as an issue. RSVP specializes in meeting this need for the residents in the Southern part of the County. Community Transportation Service provides both local and out-of-county transportation for the Town of Webb. The OFA does not transport outside of the County due to the high demand for rides in the County.

There is a shortage of RSVP volunteers providing transportation, especially with the increased gasoline prices. Many RSVP volunteers will not transport in the winter due to bad weather. Another related transportation issue is the insurance risk and potential legal ramifications involved with an RSVP volunteer providing transportation to someone. There is concern of getting sued and the possibility of financial problems if someone gets hurt while you are transporting them. Although RSVP provides insurance, the volunteers own car insurance is primary.

Wheelchair-accessible transportation is a special need that is currently provided by the OFA and Community Transportation Service.

As a new program offering, Herkimer County Office for the Aging began providing transportation for Poland, Ohio, Newport, and Middleville residents two times per month for shopping and errands which began in 2017.

The possibility of expanding public transportation has been explored, but the system would be prohibitively expensive and so has not been pursued. Birnie Bus service began a bus run to the outlying Dolgeville area, but has gotten few riders due to the limited service hours. Another issue with establishing a public transportation system is that people tend to want a service when they want it; they do not want to wait for a pick-up, and they do not want to pay for the actual cost of the services. When people have been independent and have been able to get in their own car and take care of what they need to do, it is a very difficult adjustment to lose that independence. When you no longer drive, it is difficult to have to make arrangements with someone and then wait until they are available.

**OFA Plan Activities:**

- Transportation services remain a priority service for the OFA, including wheelchair transportation.
- Continue to provide funding for the Town of Webb Community Transportation Service.
- Continue to participate in local and regional transportation study efforts such as Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study efforts and advocate for services for the elderly.
- Continue to work with the Mobility Manager from The Parkway Center to address the transportation barriers in Herkimer County.
- Continue to work with The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties to assist with funding for the Newport, Poland, Ohio and Middleville transportation route.

<b>OFA Transportation Program 2018 Client Demographics</b>			
<b>N=175</b>			
<b>Age</b>			
age unknown	3	2%	
60+	83	47%	
75+	46	26%	
85+	43	25%	
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	42	24%	
Female	133	76%	
Frail/Disabled	115	66%	
Live Alone	131	75%	
<b>Total rides = 5,027</b>			

## Information & Assistance

*The average American is bombarded with 3,000 – 6,000 messages a day.  
— Caroline Roan, U.S. Department of Labor*

Many individuals do not know what services are available to them. The same applies to their adult children and others who care about the individual. A lack of awareness of what services are available has been well documented both locally and nationally. Locally it was noted in the County’s Risk Assessment Profile, the 2018 OFA Senior Survey, and the 2018 HIICAP Client Satisfaction Survey.

Public education about the availability of services is difficult to achieve because we are all so bombarded with information on a daily basis. Until we need a particular piece of information, i.e. Long Term Services and Supports, it does not register.

The OFA and the Department of Social Services (DSS) are partners in a NY Connects project (pronounced New York Connects). NY Connects offers links to Long Term Services and Supports in Herkimer County which offers information and assistance to individuals of any age. NY Connects does not offer any services other than information and assistance. During the period of October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019, 1,699 people were served through NY Connects and 75% of these people requested information about home based services. (Home based services include companionship, home delivered meals, home health care, personal care such as bathing, personal emergency response systems, private duty nursing and telephone reassurance.)

**Information & Assistance**

During the period of 10/1/18-9/30/2019, the Office for the Aging provided over 1,734 units of information & assistance to over 1,699 individuals.

Our web site received 8,324 hits.

(These statistics include the NY Connects project statistics.)

The OFA/NY Connects uses several methods to educate the public about services available including press releases and paid ads in local newspapers, a quarterly newsletter, distribution of information directly to clients, the public library system, urgent care & the local emergency room, public speaking, mailings to senior clubs, distribution of brochures, and the internet. Word of mouth is probably the most effective tool for public education. We utilize our Advisory Council as public educators and reinforce to Council members that their job as a member is primarily 2-fold: to know enough about the OFA so they can refer people to the OFA/NY Connects when someone needs assistance and to keep the OFA/NY Connects informed of aging concerns as they hear them. Each of these public education tools helps to reach people so that they know to contact us when they have concerns.

All educational publications produced by the OFA/NY Connects such as our brochures and newsletter use a font size of 14 and other techniques to make them more easily readable.

A limitation to providing public education that has become increasingly evident to the OFA/NY Connects is that more & more individuals are telling us that they no longer get the newspaper because they cannot afford it. Also, there is extremely limited home delivery of the free weekly newspapers. Although press releases in newspapers are an inexpensive way to communicate with the public, the OFA has no control as to whether the release gets published or when. And, with more individuals not subscribing and not having access to home delivery of free papers, the ability to cost-effectively reach the public is becoming increasingly challenging.

The internet is a very cost-effective way to reach the public. The OFA/NY Connects has been committed to making the most of this medium and so provides a very large amount of info on the web site. We see our web site as an effective way to reach the adult children of the seniors more so than the seniors themselves. As the years go on and more Baby Boomers age, we would expect that the internet will be used by more seniors themselves. However, many seniors do not have computer access.

The OFA web site is part of the County of Herkimer web site. The OFA monitors web hits monthly and consistently reaches on average over 3,000 hits a month. (See Appendix F.)

**OFA/NY Connects Plan Activities:**

- Continue public education efforts via newspapers, web site, and distribution of brochures & flyers.
- Continue with NY Connects.
- Continue to make the community aware of NY Connects
- Continue to work with Community Partners to spread the word about the services the Office for the Aging/NY Connects provides
- Continue to educate current and new Advisory Council members about the importance of their role as educators within the community
- Continue to work with local legislators and other government officials to educate them on the programs offered at the Office for the Aging New York Connects

## Food

*“Office for the Aging is very considerate & helpful. I eat much more nutritious food due to variety of foods menu items I would normally never eat are delicious!*

*- 2017 Nutrition Program Client Satisfaction Survey Respondent*

Assistance with food is probably the most basic of all services. The need for food assistance can be due to being physically unable to safely prepare meals (permanently or temporarily) or it can be due to a lack of financial resources. Some of the assistance available to seniors includes Meals-on-Wheels; congregate meals, Food Stamps, Farmer Market Coupons, food pantries and programs such as Food Sense & Angel Food.

The provision of food through Meals-on-Wheels is related to non-financial need. To receive home delivered meals clients must meet eligibility criteria that do not include income. The regulations that govern both the Meals-on-Wheels and our congregate meals programs come from the federal Older Americans Act. Meals that are home delivered must be based on need – basically the inability to safely prepare meals. In fact, for home delivered and congregate meals, no questions are asked about finances unless it is to determine eligibility for some other program. Congregate meals are open to any senior wishing to participate. Congregate meals may be provided to disabled residents under the age of 60 who live in the building where congregate meals are served. This is a local decision and we have historically done so.

The OFA provides Meals-on-Wheels to most areas in the County. Due to several logistical limitations, there are geographical pockets where we are unable to provide service. Congregate meals are provided in 5 locations in the county, all in senior housing units located in Dolgeville, Little Falls, Herkimer, Ilion, and West Winfield. Approximately 80,000 meals were provided to 594 home delivered and congregate meal clients during 2018-19.

**Meals on Wheels:** Meals-on-Wheels are offered through the Herkimer County Office for the Aging. The meals are delivered to seniors who are unable to safely prepare meals due to a chronic condition or a temporary condition caused by an accident or post-hospitalization recovery. One hot noon-time meal is delivered to clients 5 days a week. Each meal contains one-third of the RDI (recommended daily intake of nutrients.) A small donation of \$3.00 per meal is suggested. The average per meal donation received last year was \$1.43.

During the period of 2018-19, 440 seniors received home delivered meals. Sixty-two (62%) of those seniors lived alone, 63% were women and 38% were aged 85 or older.

Since there are no income eligibility criteria associated with Meals on Wheels, income data is not available.

Herkimer County Meals on Wheels Clients by Percent of Total			
Age	2010-2011	2014-2015	2018-2019
<60	0%	0%	1%
60-69	8%	12%	15%
70-79	20%	21%	28%
80-84	22%	16%	14%
85+	50%	51%	42%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Meals on Wheels Clients 2010-2011 by Gender	
Gender	Percent
Female	64%
Male	36%
Total	100%

**Farmers Market Coupons** is a USDA Program that offers coupons to be used to purchase fresh fruits & vegetables at participating Farmers Markets. Each set of coupons is worth \$20.00. Farmer Market Coupons are distributed to 2 populations, low income senior citizens and WIC recipients. The OFA distributes the Coupons to the senior population. We distributed 640 coupon sets in 2019.

Part of our Nutrition Program includes the provision of **nutrition education** in order to encourage healthy eating & good nutrition. The OFA distributes a monthly newsletter called “Nutrition News.” A printed copy of the newsletter is distributed to all nutrition program participants and the newsletter is also posted to the OFA web site so it is available to all seniors and their caregivers. In conjunction, the OFA published a cookbook of healthy recipes that were a collection from our newsletter Nutrition News. The cookbook is also on-line at the OFA web site.

The OFA contracted Registered Dietitian also provides **nutrition counseling** to seniors and their caregivers. This service is often most needed after a senior develops a health problem that demands a dietary change, for example, the onset of diabetes or kidney disease, etc.

**Food pantries** are a source of emergency food for people of all ages, including senior citizens. There are 9 food pantries in Herkimer County. These pantries generally offer clients once-a-month usage. Households are given enough food for three meals a day for five days for each member of their household.

**The Food Sense Program** Food Sense is a food co-op program offering quality food at a reasonable price, with an estimated savings of up to \$15 a unit over retail. There are no age, income, or geographic requirements for the community Food Sense Program. All are welcome to

participate. You may order as many units of food as you wish for \$20.50 a unit. Bonus items are also available for purchase. SNAP is welcomed.

(per <https://www.ccherkimercounty.org/services.html> accessed 2/18/20)

**Food Stamps**, now called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is a federal program offering assistance with food related purchases for low-income households.

The number of Non-Public Assistance Food Stamp cases has risen dramatically from 1993. These cases shown in the neighboring chart are for non-Public Assistance cases and include people of all ages, including seniors. In November 2019, 1,779 seniors were receiving Food Stamps; that is approximately 33% of the total 5,194 Food Stamp cases.

Average # Non-PA Food Stamp Cases Years 2000-2011 Herkimer County (All Ages)	
2015*	5,194
2014	5,353
2013	5,145
2012	5,199
2011	4,616
2010	4,256
2009	3,742
2008	3,146
2007	2,736
2006	2,682
2005	2,577
2004	2,373
2003	2,093
2002	1,842
2001	1,597
2000	1,492
1999	1,538
1998	1,536
1997	1,682

The local Nutrition Outreach & Education Program (NOEP) at Catholic Charities has worked with many individuals to encourage them to apply for Food Stamps.

Food Stamp Pre-screens by the NOEP (Nutrition Outreach & Education Program)
July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019
95 seniors aged 60 and older were pre-screened for Food Stamps. This was 55% of the total pre-screens (174). Of the 95 seniors:
48% (45) were age 60-69
29% (28) were age 70-79
23% (22) were age 80-89

2015\* January-July

<b>Food Stamp Income Guidelines for Households with an Elderly or Disabled Member</b>		
<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Monthly Gross Income*</b>	<b>Annual Gross Income*</b>
1	\$2,023	\$24,276
2	\$2,743	\$32,916
3	\$3,463	\$41,556
4	\$4,183	\$50,196
Each additional person	\$ 720 +	\$ 8,640 +
* These figures based upon November 2018 Federal Poverty Levels		
Note: There is no resource test for households with elderly/disabled members whose income falls at or below the amount listed above, unless a member of the household has been sanctioned or disqualified from participation in the Food Stamp Program. Households with elderly/disabled members whose gross income exceeds these amounts may still be eligible for food stamps, if their countable resources do not exceed \$3,000.		
<a href="http://www.hungersolutionsny.org">www.hungersolutionsny.org</a> (Albany-September 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2018).		

In a Senior Survey conducted by the OFA in the October of 2019, the question was asked about what services are important, of the respondents, 50% identified financial assistance including Food Stamps, HEAP, and the STAR program.

**OFA Plan Activities:**

- Continue to provide home delivered and congregate meals.
- Continue to offer nutrition education and nutrition counseling.
- Continue to distribute Farmer Market Coupons.
- Continue to represent the senior population on the Ecumenical Food & Shelter Council.
- Continue to assist NOEP with the distribution of information about food assistance programs.

## **Personal Care & Safety**

Many senior citizens have difficulty performing housekeeping and personal care tasks due to chronic diseases or due to a temporary injury or acute health episode. The provision of aide services to assist with housekeeping, errands, and personal care is vital to keeping seniors at home for a longer time and preventing, or at least postponing, nursing home placement.

Safety equipment such as PERS (personal emergency response systems), grab rails, raised toilets, smoke alarms, extra-loud doorbells & phone ringers, wheelchair ramps and other such adaptive equipment are very helpful in keeping seniors safe at home.

Caregivers often provide a large amount of care to their spouse or other family member in order to help them remain at home. These caregivers deserve special attention as they can become overloaded. In the words of one caregiver after her spouse was placed in a nursing home, “I did not realize how much I was doing for him. As I look back on it all, I just did one more thing, and one more thing, until I was doing almost everything for him.” Information, assistance, training and respite are often needed by the caregiver. It is not uncommon for the caregiving spouse to die before the care receiving spouse due to the stress of caregiving.

The Office for the Aging provides specialized assistance to caregivers including information & assistance, training, respite, and public education. A free caregiver newsletter is distributed monthly to interested caregivers; this newsletter is also posted to our web site. Respite services include in-home respite, day care in the Town of Webb, and institutional respite.

The Office for the Aging works closely with the Adult Protective Unit of the Herkimer County Department of Social Services. The OFA makes referrals to Adult Protective occasionally and works cooperatively with Adult Protective to provide appropriate services to Adult Protective clients. The OFA assists APS by publishing a public education article in the OFA/RSVP joint newsletter and also by distributing public education material to OFA clients.

### **OFA Plan Activities:**

- Continue the provision of shopping, housekeeping, and personal care services.
- Continue caregiver services.
- Continue to work closely with the Adult Protective Unit, DSS.

## Medical and Health Related

**Health Insurance:** Having health insurance is vital. Without adequate insurance, the financial burden can bankrupt someone. Health insurance claims and issues can be overwhelming unless a senior has an adult child or someone to assist them. This relates not only to medical insurance claims, but to decisions related to Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage and other insurance policy decisions. The OFA provides funding for a HIICAP (health insurance information, counseling, and assistance program) that assists seniors with the highly complex and confusing world of health insurance. The OFA subcontracts this program to Catholic Charities. During 4/1/2018-3/31/2019, HIICAP had 2,818 client contacts.

<b>HIICAP Contacts 4/1/2018-3/31/2019</b>		
Contacts in which the total time spent with or on behalf of the client was		
1-9 minutes	20	1%
10-29 minutes	835	52%
30-59 minutes	374	23%
60 or more minutes	382	24%
Total	1,611	100%

It is readily apparent from the length of time involved with client contacts that the issues are not simple.

**Medications:** Many seniors take numerous prescription and non-prescription (over the counter) drugs. These medications have many side effects and can cause difficulties. The OFA provides funding for the provision of information to seniors regarding medication management. This is implementing through our Falls Prevention Program.

**Discharge Planning** is an important tool, especially for senior citizens and their caregivers. The NY Connects project is assisting seniors and their caregivers by providing valuable information related to hospital discharge planning. These materials are now available on our NY Connects web site and printed materials are being distributed to both OFA and Alternatives Unit clients who we know are hospitalized. This approach broadcasts the information to the general public as well as providing it directly to clients/caregivers who the OFA knows have been hospitalized.

Herkimer County HealthNet provides Diabetes Prevention classes. The OFA has assisted HealthNet outreach/advertise the availability of these classes by distributing flyers to OFA clients.

**Health Promotion (Falls Prevention, A Matter of Balance):** The Herkimer County Office for the Aging works to reduce falls among older people living in the community. Two specific courses were added to assist with keeping individuals living in their own as independently as possible while reducing the risk of falling. Tai chi classes and a Matter of Balance are evidence-based courses held by the OFA from 2018-2019. See data below for these programs.

<b>Tai Chi (4/1/2018-3/31/2019)</b>	<b>Matter of Balance (4/1/2018-3/31/2019)</b>
Total Units: <b>854</b>	Total units of service: <b>80</b>
Reported balance improvement: <b>98% of students</b>	Reported they will continue to exercise: <b>80% of students</b>

**OFA Plan Activities:**

- Continue to provide health insurance information and assistance services.
- Continue to provide medication management education.
- Continue discharge planning efforts to assist seniors and their caregivers.
- A representative of the OFA will continue to serve on the Herkimer County Public Health Services Advisory Board.
- Continue to work on our Falls prevention goals with our Falls Prevention Coalition Members.
- A representative of the OFA will continue to serve on the board of Herkimer County HealthNet. The Mission of the Herkimer County HealthNet is to improve the health and well-being of individuals who live, work, play, and learn in Herkimer County.

**Category 2: Belonging and Love****Recreation**

Noun. Recreation - An activity that diverts or amuses or stimulates.

Recreation - activity that refreshes and recreates; activity that renews your health and spirits by enjoyment and relaxation  
<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/recreation>

Herkimer County has sponsored an annual Senior Citizen Picnic for over 20 years and it has always been a popular event. It is estimated that over 600 seniors attended the picnic last year. Many Herkimer County employees, including OFA employees, help make the day a success.

**OFA Plan Activities:**

- Continue to participate in the Herkimer County Senior Picnic
- Continue to provide to Senior Clubs and other organizations to assist in the provision of recreational opportunities to seniors

## **Category 3: Esteem & Self-Actualization**

### **Volunteerism**

Giving to others through the vehicle of volunteering provides people (of all ages) with many rewards. The OFA offers volunteer opportunities at each of their congregate meal sites and without their assistance, fewer meals would be able to be served. The OFA also offers volunteer opportunities through membership on the OFA Advisory Council.

The OFA recognizes outstanding volunteers in the community through annual awards. Annually, nominations from the public are reviewed and two awards are presented: Senior Citizen of the Year and Outstanding Contribution.

OFA Plan Activities:

- Continue to foster volunteers for congregate meal sites and the Advisory Council.
- Continue to recognize community volunteers through presentation of annual awards.

## **Appendix A: Services Offered by the Office for the Aging**

The mission of the Office for the Aging (OFA) is to provide a range of supportive services to the Herkimer County senior citizen population and their families. The goal is to assist senior citizens to remain in their homes independently for as long as possible. Those with the greatest economic and or social needs are given priority. In order to assist these seniors, the following services are offered:

### **Resource Inventory:**

#### **Office for the Aging**

- *Meals on Wheels*
- *congregate meals*
- *nutrition counseling*
- *In-home aide services for housekeeping & personal care*
- *Caregiver Services, including info, assistance, training, & respite*
- *Transportation; wheelchair accessible vehicle available*
- *Information & assistance & referral*
- *Legal services*
- *HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program)*
- *HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling & Assistance Program) subcontracted to Catholic Charities.*
- *Participation in the Herkimer County Senior Picnic and assist with other Senior Recreation*
- *Opportunities for volunteerism & employment*
- *Falls Prevention*
- *Outreach*

## **Appendix B: Disaster Assistance**

The Office for the Aging will continue to be a member of the Herkimer County Emergency Planning Committee (CEPC) and Herkimer-Oneida Organizations Active in Disaster.

Herkimer County Office for the Aging will continue to work with Herkimer County Emergency Manager to continue to identify individuals who are vulnerable who may need assistance during a disaster

## **Appendix C: Resource Inventory**

The OFA actively participated in updating the Herkimer County Human Services Directory. This Directory is housed at the Herkimer County HealthNet web site at [www.herkimerhealthnet.com](http://www.herkimerhealthnet.com).

We also conducted a resource inventory specific to long term care services for our NY Connects program.

Under our NY Connects project, an on-line directory of long term care services will be required as part of the State-wide NY Connects. You can find this directory at <https://www.nyconnects.ny.gov/>

## **Appendix D: Targeting**

Inherent in the federal Older Americans Act is recognition of the need to target the limited resources available and to serve those with greatest economic or social need. The targeted groups are: low-income, frail, vulnerable, and minority elderly; these populations are to be served at least equal to their relative proportion of the population.

Targeting activities of the OFA include:

- Making public our mandated responsibility of targeting. We meet this through including the targeting statement of 'giving priority to those with the greatest economic and social needs' on our OFA brochure, and our web site.
- The OFA practices equal opportunity employment practices. We include EOE statements on job announcements and in our subcontracts.
- Ensure that targeted populations are represented on our Advisory Council.
- Continue to participate in training opportunities as they become available.

As the chart below illustrates, we meet our targeting goals.

Targeting Objectives				
	ACS 2013-2017 5-year Estimates	Percent of total	Served by OFA	Percent Served by OFA
Total # aged 60+	16,761	100%	549	100.0%
Low income	2,995	18%	316	58%
Low income minority	75	0.4%	8	1.5%
Frail/disabled	4,475	27%	418	76%
Aged 85+	1,171	7%	204	37.0%
Live Alone	4,205	25%	356	65.0%
Rural	7,543	45%	464	85.0%
Limited English Proficiency *	135	.8%		
Hispanic *	94	0.5%	3	0.5%
Native American/Alaskan Native *	63	0.3%	0	0.0%
Asian *	59	0.3%	0	0.0%
Black *	68	0.4%	2	0.4 %
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander *	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

\* numbers for these categories are estimates provided by the NYS OFA

Targeting goals have been met as the OFA provides service to targeted populations at least equal to their relative proportion in the population.

**Data limitations:**

*The actual number of clients served is actually higher than is noted above. This is because many people who call us are only seeking general information and because of the limited contact we have with them, we do not collect info regarding their names, ages, or other data listed.*

*Also, for many clients we serve, not all of the characteristics listed in the chart above are gathered. For example, on a HEAP application there is no question asking ethnicity or race, so for the nearly 1,100 clients we process HEAP applications for, unless we gathered that info from providing them with some other service, we do not know their race/ethnicity. Another example is home delivered meal clients; because income is not an eligibility criteria for meals, unless we gathered income info from providing them with some other service, we do not know that info.*

## **Appendix E:**

# **Herkimer County Office for the Aging Needs Assessment**

### **Summary of Efforts:**

The OFA collaborated with other Herkimer County agencies on a **“Risk Assessment Profile”** (RAP) during 2015. The Risk Assessment Profile included the collection and analysis of data (including census data). The Risk Assessment Profile included data regarding the entire County population, children, youth, families, and senior citizens. The entire report is available on the Herkimer County web site. Data most pertinent to the OFA needs assessment are included in this Plan.

See: <http://www.herkimercounty.org>

A **needs assessment survey** was sent out to approximately 400 individuals in October 2015 which included current clients of the Office for the Aging, Senior clubs, Advisory Council members, Public Hearing participants, over fifty human service providers in the area, and individuals who reside in senior housing in Herkimer County. An internet based survey tool was used to distribute the survey to human service providers and other organizations that would be vital to providing input on what services are needed. Two focus groups were held one with The Resource Center for Independent Living Advisory Board and one included the Mohawk Valley Community Action Advisory Board. During the Office for the Aging Public Hearing individuals completed surveys and were asked what services were most important to keep individuals independent in their communities. Herkimer County Office for the Aging worked in collaboration with the Community Foundation of the Mohawk Valley and held three focus groups to answer the question, “What is the specific thing would allow an older adult to live independently in their community.”

Data from OFA clients was also gathered through responses to our **client satisfaction surveys**. The responses typically illustrate the positive outcome involved with the provision of services offered.

The data collected showed that basic services such as in-home services, Social Adult Day Services, Care giver Services, Home Delivered and Congregate Meals, transportation, HHCAP, financial assistance such as HEAP, home repairs and inability to pay property taxes appeared to be the most pressing issues. 74% of those who filled out the survey were females. Of the caregivers who filled out the surveys 32% responded that they were stressed or overwhelmed.

### **To see the complete results of the Survey SEE APPENDIX G**

As part of the Needs Assessment process we examined the current waiting lists for the programs that HCOFA offers. The respite program currently has 36 individuals waiting for services. The EISEP program currently has a waiting list of 15 individuals and the Companion Homemaker program currently has 29 individuals on the waiting lists.

The OFA staff is involved with many community agencies and boards in order to gather information regarding local services, senior issues, and to provide advocacy on the part of individuals who may need assistance with Long Term Services and Supports. A list of affiliations includes:

- Herkimer County HealthNet (Executive Committee, full board, and Long Term Care Committee);
- Herkimer- Oneida Organizations Active in Disaster
- Herkimer County Emergency Planning Council
- Interagency County Planning (ICP) Human Resource Planning Team
- Alternatives to Incarceration Advisory Board
- Ecumenical Food & Shelter Council
- Herkimer County Public Health Services Advisory Board
- Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency Advisory Board
- Park Way Center Advisory Committee
- Resource Center for Independent Living Advisory Board
- Herkimer County Department of Social Services- Human Development Committee
- Herkimer County Mental Hygiene Board
- Herkimer-Oneida Transportation Coordination Committee

The OFA Advisory Council provided input into this Plan through participation in Advisory Council meetings and through the public hearing process associated with this project.

The OFA participated in the DSS Adult Protective Planning process for the DSS Plan and the associated public hearing.

## Appendix F: Web Hits of OFA & NY Connects Over Time

Unless the number of hits &/or data downloaded reaches a certain threshold, info regarding the # of hits is not available. Data is collected from either "Top 30 of 3136 Total URL's" or "Top 10 of 3136 Total URL's by kb f." Actual hits for POE/NY Connects is actually higher than the Sum listed above as some months do not get enough hits for the info to be available, but there were probably still some hits.

Web Hits for OFA & NY Connects		
Month/Year	OFA	NY Connects (View 28)
Jan-20	544	n/a
Dec-19	440	n/a
Nov-19	934	n/a
Oct-19	437	n/a
Sep-19	409	n/a
Aug-19	399	n/a
Jul-19	399	n/a
Aug-19	432	n/a
Jun-19	677	n/a
May-19	248	n/a
Apr-19	613	429
Mar-19	525	324
Feb-19	928	499
Jan-19	431	unavailable
Dec-18	577	366
Nov-18	971	623
Oct-18	637	318
Sep-18	641	302
Aug-18	1,430	499
Jul-18	2,005	759
Jun-18	2,952	702
May-18	2,181	unavailable

## **Herkimer County Office for the Aging Needs Assessment- 2019**

**INTRODUCTION:** The Herkimer County Office for the Aging/NY Connects completed a Needs Assessment in preparation for the Four Year Plan for 2020-2024.

**SURVEY:** The clients were asked to respond to a series of statements that would measure the level of needs in the community. The survey was sent to over 850 individuals in the community which included the Office for the Aging Advisory Board, Senior Clubs, and current clients of the Office for the Aging, Public Hearing participants, over fifty human services organizations in the area, and individuals who reside in senior housing in Herkimer County. An internet based survey tool was also used was used to distribute the tool to human service providers and other organizations that would be vital in providing input of the needs of our older population. 400 surveys were completed.

The participants were asked the following questions and the results are listed in the percentage of clients who answered that question out of the total responses. Important, is a concern, Important, but is NOT a concern, Not Important, Not Concern. The results are as follows:

### **Housing**

Able to perform household chores (cleaning, etc)

**39%** Important, is a concern    **46%** Important, but is NOT a concern    **15%** Not Important, Not Concern

Finding reliable help to perform home maintenance / repairs

**41%** Important, is a concern    **40%** Important, but is NOT a concern    **20%** Not Important, Not Concern

Ability to pay rent or taxes

**33%** Important, is a concern    **49%** Important, but is NOT a concern    **18%** Not Important, Not Concern

Able to pay for home heating

**37%** Important, is a concern    **50%** Important, but is NOT a concern    **13%** Not Important, Not Concern

### **Transportation**

To medical appointments

**39%**Important, is a concern **47%**Important, but is NOT a concern **14%**Not Important, Not Concern

To out of county medical appointments

**46%**Important, is a concern **38%**Important, but is NOT a concern **16%**Not Important, Not Concern

To the grocery store and other errands

**32%**Important, is a concern **49%**Important, but is NOT a concern **19%**Not Important, Not Concern

Driving my own car

**26%**Important, is a concern **42%**Important, but is NOT a concern **32%** Not Important, Not Concern

**Nutrition/Food**

Having enough money for nutritious food

**36%**Important, is a concern **50%** Important, but is NOT a concern **14%**Not Important, Not Concern

Being able to shop and cook for myself

**34%**Important, is a concern **51%**Important, but is NOT a concern **15%**Not Important, Not Concern

Able to follow a special diet recommended by my doctor

**28%**Important, is a concern **44%**Important, but is NOT a concern **28%**Not Important, Not Concern

Important and Satisfied, Important and NOT Satisfied, Not Important and Satisfied.  
The results are as follows:

**Services and Supports**

Respite services for caregivers, such as adult day programs, for people with dementia or other functional impairments

**24%**Important and Satisfied **18%**Important and NOT Satisfied **11%**Not Important and Satisfied **47%**N/A

Access to senior centers

**31%**Important and Satisfied **20%**Important and NOT Satisfied **15%**Not Important and Satisfied **34%**N/A

Transportation options for those unable to drive

**35%**Important and Satisfied **25%**Important and NOT Satisfied **10%**Not Important and Satisfied **31%**N/A

In-home personal care services

**34%**Important and Satisfied **18%**Important and NOT Satisfied **11%**Not Important and Satisfied **37%**N/A

Ability to participate in Congregate Meal Sites or receive Home Delivered Meals

**42%**Important and Satisfied **10%**Important and NOT Satisfied **12%**Not Important and Satisfied **35%**N/A

Ability to obtain help in applying for government programs

**47%**Important and Satisfied **18%**Important and NOT Satisfied **9%**Not Important and Satisfied **26%**N/A

**Elder Abuse-Scams- Financial Exploitation**

Are you or anyone that you know a victim of abuse?

**8%** Yes **92%**No

If yes, did you or the victim seek assistance?

**14%** Yes **86%** No

Are you or anyone that you know been a victim of a scam?

**24%**Yes **76%** No

Are you or anyone that you know had money taken without your/their permission?

**14%**Yes **86%**No

*Do you know where to get assistance if you or anyone that you know have been a victim of abuse, a scam, financial exploitation?*

**45%**Yes **55%**No

*If yes, where could you get assistance?*

<i>Police</i>	<i>Office for the Aging</i>	<i>Adult Protective</i>	<i>Attorney</i>	<i>Catholic Charities</i>
<b>50%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>

Senior Housing	911	Family	Bank	Healthcare
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**5%**

**4%**

**3%**

**2%**

**1%**

**If you are caring for another individual, please answer the following questions.**

For whom do you provide care?

**44% Spouse 49% Parent 6% Adult Child (over 21) 0% Minor Aged Child (20 & younger)**

**27% of the total respondents to the survey stated that they were a caregiver**

Does the individual for whom you care live in your home?

**44% Yes 56% No**

Does the individual have memory problems and/or dementia?

**32% Yes 68% No**

Do you feel overwhelmed and/or stressed in providing care?

**33% Yes 67% No**

**Where I turn for Help:**

If you, or someone you know, has been in the hospital in the past year, did you/they have the information and supports needed to return home?

**46% Yes 13% No 29% Not applicable 12% Don't Know**

Have you heard of "NY Connects", the local program that helps consumers with information, assistance and connections to needed long term services and supports?

**27% Yes 58% No 15% Not applicable**

**Health**

Are you or someone you are caring for managing any ongoing health condition?

**70% Yes 30% No**

Do you feel overwhelmed and/or stressed due to this condition?

**32% Yes 68% No**

Are you or someone you are living with have experienced?

Loss of a partner

**37% Yes                      63%No**

Loss of housing

**7%Yes                      93%No**

Difficulty managing everyday activities

**29%Yes                      71%No**

Have you felt sad in the last 6 months?

**44%Yes                      56%No**

If you answered yes, did you seek assistance?

**24%Yes                      76%No**

**Falls**

Do you have a fear of falling?

**52% Yes                      48% No**

Have you fallen in the last 6 months?

**27% Yes                      73% No**

**Legal Services**

Did you need Legal Assistance from an Attorney in the last 6 months?

**18%Yes                      83% No**

If yes what types of services did you need?

**60%Will/ Power of Attorney    13%Credit/financial issue    11%housing/real property**

**9% medical bills                      7%Family Court**

Where did you receive these services?

**14% Office for the Aging Legal Services    19%Legal Aid Society    67%Private Attorney**

**Demographics:**

Sex: **26% Male                      74% Female**

Age: **4% 55-59                      23% 60-69                      39% 70-79                      13% 80-84  
**22% 85+****

Persons living in your home, including yourself:

**63%** 1                      **28%** 2                      **6%** 3                      **4%** 4+

Living Arrangements: **53%** Homeowner                      **44%** Renter                      **3%** Other

Income (per year):

1 person household: **21%** < \$11,491                      **32%** \$11,491-\$22,980                      **13%** > \$22,980

2 person household: **5%** < \$15,510                      **14%** \$15,510-\$31,020                      **15%** > \$31,020