

AGENDA
BCESP Advisory Council Levy Update Meeting

May 7, 2025 | 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

LifeSpan – Bever Room
1900 Fairgrove Avenue, Hamilton, OH 45011

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/95863305877?pwd=EapXh2q1ehYWbGbOeles7b523j7UQe.1>

Meeting ID: 958 6330 5877

Passcode: 695899

Call in: 1-929-205-6099

CALL TO ORDER	Jennifer Heston-Mullins
APPROVAL OF MINUTES ❖ March 6, 2025, Minutes (Action Needed)	Jennifer Heston-Mullins
QUARTERLY REPORTS	
COMMITTEE REPORTS	
OLD BUSINESS ❖ Levy Update ○ Recommendation (Action Needed)	Ken Wilson & Nan Cahall
NEW BUSINESS ❖ Annual Report	Paula Smith
HEARING THE PUBLIC	Jennifer Heston-Mullins
ADJOURNMENT (Action Needed)	Jennifer Heston-Mullins

NEXT MEETING: June 12, 2025

MINUTES
BCESP ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025 @ 3:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

<i>Members Present:</i>	<i>COA Staff:</i>	<i>Guests:</i>
Michael Berding Cara Brown Tresea Hall Jennifer Heston-Mullins Kevin Kurpieski Laura Lacy Emily Liechty Sherry Lind Jennifer Roth Amy Simpson Sherrill Swann Nancy Williams	Ronnie Spears Ken Wilson Jennifer Lake	Karen Dages Katie Furniss Abbie Gunnon Joyce Kachelries Emi Smith
<i>Excused:</i>	<i>Facilitator:</i>	<i>Scribe:</i>
Shawn Cowan John McCarthy	Jennifer Heston-Mullins	Christina Adams
<i>Absent:</i>		

CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

The March 6, 2025, Butler County Elderly Services Program (ESP) Advisory Council was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Jennifer Heston-Mullins.

Jennifer welcomed new member Tresea Hall and introductions were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jennifer Heston-Mullins called for a motion to approve the December 12, 2024 Butler County ESP Advisory Council minutes.

Motion: Michael Berding made a motion to approve the December 12, 2024 minutes as presented.

Second: Sherrill Swann seconded the motion.

Action: The December 12, 2024 minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

QUARTERLY REPORTS

Program Dashboard & Financial Report (Oct-Dec 2024)

Ken provided a review of the Program Dashboard for quarter 4 (please see handout for full details). This report includes the full year of 2024. Managed enrollment was implemented in February 2024 to tighten eligibility and keep the program within budget. The 4th quarter ended with 2,769 individuals enrolled in ESP. This is 11% (357 individuals) lower than last year. There were 1,517 individuals enrolled in the Medicaid programs. Next Generation MyCare will be implemented in December of 2026. Molina and three additional health care plans will be contracted. Aetna lost their contract. There will be a number of

transitions with this implementation beginning in 2026 as individuals move off of Aetna onto a new health care plan. The cost per client continues to increase even with managed enrollment in place as individuals with higher acuity are being enrolled. This increase is due to an improvement in the availability of home care aides, so the backlog of individuals waiting for home care assistance has decreased. Additionally, in October 2024, new rates went into effect for home care assistance and home delivered meal providers.

The number of individuals transferring from ESP to Fast Track Home (FTH) decreased from the 3rd quarter. In order to keep costs down, we have been more restrictive about individuals transferring from FTH to ESP. We are exploring adding additional restrictions on FTH going forward because we are concerned about staying within budget in 2025.

Jennifer Roth asked if case managers direct individuals to other options if they do not qualify for FTH. Ken shared that FTH and ESP are payor of last resort. There are a number of individuals that come through FTH that are eligible for PASSPORT. COA assists with getting these individuals enrolled in Medicaid then PASSPORT. Ken noted that some of the FTH costs were offset by the grant received from McCullough-Hyde Hospital along with the Healthy Aging grant and ARPA funds. All of these funding sources have been expended.

At the end of the 4th quarter, there were only 154 (11%) individuals waiting for a home care assistance provider. This is a significant drop from there 1st quarter where there were 418 (29%) individuals waiting for home care assistance. In 2024 there was a cost savings of \$648,750 from connecting individuals who have a Medicare Advantage Plan to their benefits. Ken noted that the rolling annual Medicare benefit cost savings will be adjusted going forward because what has been reported is the value of the Medicare benefit which is not a dollar for dollar savings to ESP.

Jennifer Heston-Mullins asked what has changed with the home care network; have the providers hired additional employees. Ken shared that this is a combination of the increased utilization of Consumer Directed Care (CDC), the improvement of home care provider staffing, and we are enrolling fewer individuals due to managed enrollment which has allowed the home care providers to catch up with the client volume.

Ronnie reviewed the 4th quarter Financial Report (please see handout for full details). These are actuals for the full year of 2024. The initial levy appropriations budget was \$12.5M. Based on projections, we saw that we needed additional funding. The county approved an additional \$500K bringing the budgeted levy appropriations to \$13M. The actual total levy appropriations for the year was \$12.9M. Operating expenses were within budget by 2.3% within all programs.

Cara asked Ronnie to speak to the COA administrative operating expenses exceeding the budget by \$44K. Ronnie shared that this is a set fee based on the contract, and services were higher in 2024 than budgeted which contributed to that variance.

The \$800K Healthy Aging Grant was used to offset levy expenses (no administrative fees). Overall, we were within 5% of budget. 2024 was a tight year and 2025 is expected to be even tighter. We will be monitoring the budget closely.

Cara asked if we had more individuals needing behavioral health services since we were over budget. Ronnie noted that this was a timing issue due to the prior year invoice being late which made 2023 slightly lower and 2024 slightly higher.

Program Update Report

Jennifer Lake shared the Program Update Report (please see handout for details).

2024 Provider Monitoring Summary Results

Our contracted auditors do an annual review of all ESP providers. Any issues of noncompliance found are included in this report. One home care assistance provider was unable to evidence 12 units of service, so we recouped this money (\$87). An additional home care assistance provider had an issue with employee training documents. The employee was able to complete the training, and the appropriate documentation has been provided. A Butler County adult day service provider had some issues with their kitchen and meal service. Our nutrition business relations partner was able to work with them to ensure there would be no food safety issues. Overall, there were no ongoing issues that would require interruption in service.

Maximum Reimbursement Rates

These reimbursement rates are obtained through a competitive bidding process. Each service has their own cycle, so when a Request for Proposal (RFP) is sent, we ask for three years of rates to be provided with an option for year four and five.

Provider Quality Report

The Provider Quality report (see handout for full details) is the data we collect on our ESP programs to include the billable units by service, the market share of the provider network, and the distinct number of clients served in each service. Additionally, this report contains the number of satisfaction (SASI) surveys completed for each service. Care managers go through the survey questions with clients during assessments. This data is used to monitor provider performance and maintain a level of quality with our providers. Our business relations partners review this data with providers quarterly. If an issue is identified with a provider based on their quality scores, we will meet with them more frequently and possibly develop a quality action plan. In the 4th quarter, a home care assistance agency experienced a significant decline in satisfaction ratings. After reviewing the results and each question with the provider, they are doing a deep dive into the issues and performing their own quality checks. They are also making sure they have quality staff and are training or retraining if needed. We will be monitoring and if their scores remain low in the next quarter, the provider may be put on a quality action plan where we would require more deliverables and work with them to get them back up to the benchmark.

Jennifer Heston-Mullins asked if the home care assistance company had a low number of surveys returned. Jennifer Lake noted that this provider did have a low number of surveys returned and this is taken into consideration. We are also able to pull actual comments gathered from the surveys. These comments are not linked to a particular client. When our business relations partner pulled these comments, there were more favorable comments than unfavorable comments. Because they had a lower number of surveys completed, one or two negative reviews can pull the score down which could be the case for this provider's low scores. Even if having a low number of surveys affects a provider's scores, we still communicate with the provider, ask for their input, and develop a plan.

Emily commented that Oxford Seniors was disappointed in their previous HDM SASI scores. They worked with Provider Services to come up with ideas to bring their scores back up and are pleased that this has been successful.

Governance Committee Report

Kevin shared the Governance Report (please see report for details). He and Sherry Lind have been reviewing the bylaws and discussing possible changes. Input from the Advisory Council is requested and proposed changes will be voted on at the June meeting. There was discussion on whether a treasurer is needed on the Advisory Council. We currently do not have a treasurer and if the Advisory Council feels a treasurer is not needed, the bylaws will be updated to reflect this. Sherry shared her concern about having the financial information only contained within COA, particularly in the current climate. An Advisory Council treasurer may provide more legitimacy. Kevin noted that the county receives all reports including financial reports provided by COA. Ken shared that the Advisory Council used to function as a traditional board as a separate entity. There were disagreements between the board and the county on how some of the funds were being spent which led to the county clarifying that this is an Advisory Council and policy decisions are made by the county. At this time, some of the language shifted in the bylaws, but a treasurer remained. It is up to the Advisory Council if they would like to have a treasurer. If it is decided to have a treasurer, the responsibilities need to be clearly defined.

Michael noted that in sections 9 and 10 of the bylaws, trustee is still referenced versus council member. Kevin will make this correction.

Action: Kevin to correct section 9 and 10 to read “council member” versus “trustee.”

Jennifer Heston-Mullins asked about section 6 of the bylaws regarding maintaining geographical council member representation. Kevin noted that there are too many townships to have a representative from each. Having several of the larger townships is referenced.

Sherry Lind commented on the Services Committee that was discontinued approximately one year ago. She feels it would be advantageous to have a subcommittee who could be prepared for any levy work needed. Kevin noted that work currently falls under the Community Engagement Committee. Jennifer Heston-Mullins commented that there was a great deal of overlap with the Services Committee and the Advisory Council which is why it was decided to no longer have a Services Committee. Sherry would like the Advisory Council to give some additional thought to this and revisit at a future meeting.

Jennifer Heston-Mullins suggested that Community Education become an agenda item. Ken shared that this could become a standing agenda item to discuss community events and information.

Action: Ken to add Community Education as a standing agenda item.

Amy Simpson noted that she and Cara Brown are not on the roster in the Governance report. Kevin will update the roster.

Cara Brown recommended that the Physician Representative be updated to Medical Practitioner Representative to allow this position to be filled by a nurse practitioner, etc. Kevin shared that this will be updated to Medical Professional Representative. The Medical Professional Representative is the only remaining vacancy.

Action: Kevin to update the roster, removing Victoria Cheng and adding Cara Brown and Amy Simpson.

Levy Update

Ken provided an update on the Butler County Senior Levy update (see handout for details). Since the December 2024 meeting, we have met with Judi Boyko, Butler County Administrator twice. At the February meeting, she convened all of the county-wide levy groups. In addition to COA, this included Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), the Mental Health Board, and Children's Services. We discussed where we are in the cycle of levies and who is in need of an increase. Because our levy expires, we must go on the ballot in 2025 and will do so in November. We have not requested an increase in 20 years, and we are in need of an increase. DDOD is also in need of an increase and has requested to be on the November ballot, but they have the option of waiting until 2026. We will be meeting with the county commissioners individually at the end of March to present our levy options and get their input. At the end of 2025, we are projecting to have one month of levy funds in reserve. We currently have a 1.3 millage levy. Ronnie is working with the auditor's office to determine the effective rate. The effective rate of our millage is likely under one mill because each time property values increase the effective millage decreases. The only millage increase is with new construction. We will be presenting three options to the commissioners; 1) Renewal of \$10.9M levy, 2) renewal and \$6M increase, 3) Renewal and \$9.5M increase. We will be recommending option 3 – Renewal and \$9.5M increase. This option would meet the growing needs of the county through the 2026-2030 cycle.

Cara asked what the renewal and \$9.5M increase will cost the tax payer and if the levy passes, when the money will be available to the program. Ken shared that information is not yet available. Ronnie is working with the auditor to have this information to share. If the levy passes, the money will be available to the program in 2026.

Kevin asked what program modifications would be needed if we went with option 2; would this require tightening eligibility or limiting service, e.g., a client attending adult day service one day per week versus two. Ken shared that those are examples of program modifications. Also, we are already exploring increasing the number of individuals that have a copay and modifying ESP eligibility as a cost saving option. Tightening eligibility would mean serving fewer individuals at a higher cost which could cause a loss of support for the program. We are also considering structuring levy programs to focus on short-term needs to impact more older adults.

Sherry asked if we are the payor of last resort, how do we collect a copayment. Ken shared that the copayment is based on a client's ability to pay. This information will be provided when we discuss the updated sliding fee scale and the fixed copayment proposal.

Jennifer Roth asked when we will know if option 3 is accepted to go on the ballot. Ken noted that the next step will be to meet with the commissioners individually at the end of March. Following these meetings, we should have an understanding of what will be supported and then we will schedule a public meeting to share what the commissioners will adopt to go on the ballot. Nan will be reaching out to begin scheduling presentations to local civic groups to provide education on the senior services levy. Kevin added that the monthly levy meetings have begun. If anyone else is interested, reach out to Nan or Kevin. Even if you are not on the levy committee, there will be opportunities to be engaged in the levy campaign.

Cara asked if we have considered bringing a client who has benefited from the program in front of the commissioners. Ken shared that we have done this in the past. This works very well if there is a family caregiver that is willing to speak.

Ken noted that the presentation reviewed today is a draft and the final presentation will be shared when completed. We will also share talking points, FAQs as well as a script for the annual report which will include information about the levy going on the ballot.

Action: Ken to send final report to Advisory Council when completed and share talking points, FAQ, and a script for discussing the annual report.

NEW BUSINESS

Updated Sliding Fee Scale

Ronnie reviewed the Updated Sliding Fee Scale. This scale is adjusted to the federal poverty level guidelines and is used to determine a client's copayment, taking their income and the number of people in the household into consideration.

Jennifer Heston-Mullins requested a motion to approve the Updated Sliding Fee Scale.

Motion: Kevin Kurpieski made a motion to approve the Updated Sliding Fee Scale.

Second: Jennifer Roth seconded the motion.

Action: The Updated Sliding Fee Scale was unanimously approved as presented.

Fixed Copayment Proposal

Ken and Ronnie reviewed the Fixed Copayment Proposal. Copayments collected are reinvested in the program to serve more older adults. Copayment collections have been declining, and COA is evaluating changes to the copayment process. Goals of the changes being considered are to simplify the process and reduce complexity, maintain or increase copayment revenue, and ensure the process addresses individual hardships appropriately. Multiple models were tested, and the current model uses a flat fixed monthly cost versus a percentage copay. This model is being piloted with new enrollments in Hamilton County. The final proposal along with the implementation plan and timeline will be presented for approval at the June meeting. Once implemented, the new copayment model will be used for new enrollees. Current enrollees will be moved to a fixed copayment based on the average copay they have been making.

Sherrill asked if income is verified. Ken shared that an individual's tax return is used. If an individual does not file taxes, the client completes an attestation form that includes reporting their income from social security, IRAs, savings, etc. We have been informed that the Ohio auditor's offices have access to tax return information through an online portal. We are exploring if they can provide us with the adjusted gross income for an individual who is applying for our program to simplify this step in the application process.

Sherry asked if an individual is a homeowner, how is their home's value determined. Ronnie noted that we only include liquid assets.

Ronnie shared that approximately 30% of Butler County ESP clients have a copay. The average copay is \$26.41 per month.

Emily asked how the copay is affected if a client's services change within a month or if there is a significant weather event that interrupted service.. Ken noted that those details are still being worked out. Our goal is to lock in an individuals fixed copay amount but if there is a significant change in their services, e.g., there is a change from only receiving home delivered meals to receiving home care assistance and emergency response service in addition. A copay will need to be reevaluated and calculated with these types of

significant events or changes to services. We are also evaluating suspending a copay if an individual is hospitalized.

Jennifer Roth asked if the feedback from the Hamilton County pilot has been positive. Ken shared the feedback has been positive.

Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality Forms

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality forms were provided in member packets. These forms are required to be completed annually.

HEARING THE PUBLIC

There were no individuals present from the public who wished to speak.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

N/A

ADJOURNMENT

Jennifer Heston-Mullins requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:57 PM.

Motion: Kevin Kurpieski made a motion to adjourn.

Second: Michael Berding seconded the motion.

Action: It was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 4:57 pm.

NEXT MEETING

June 12, 2025

Senior Levy Options

Butler County Commissioners
April 2025



Background

Ohio law allows for senior service levies – not to exceed five years

Butler County levy due to go on the ballot in 2025

77% of voters supported the last renewal in 2020

Last increase was in 2005 (20 years).

2010, 2015, and 2020 were renewal levies

Butler County senior levy is currently generating \$10.9 Million annually

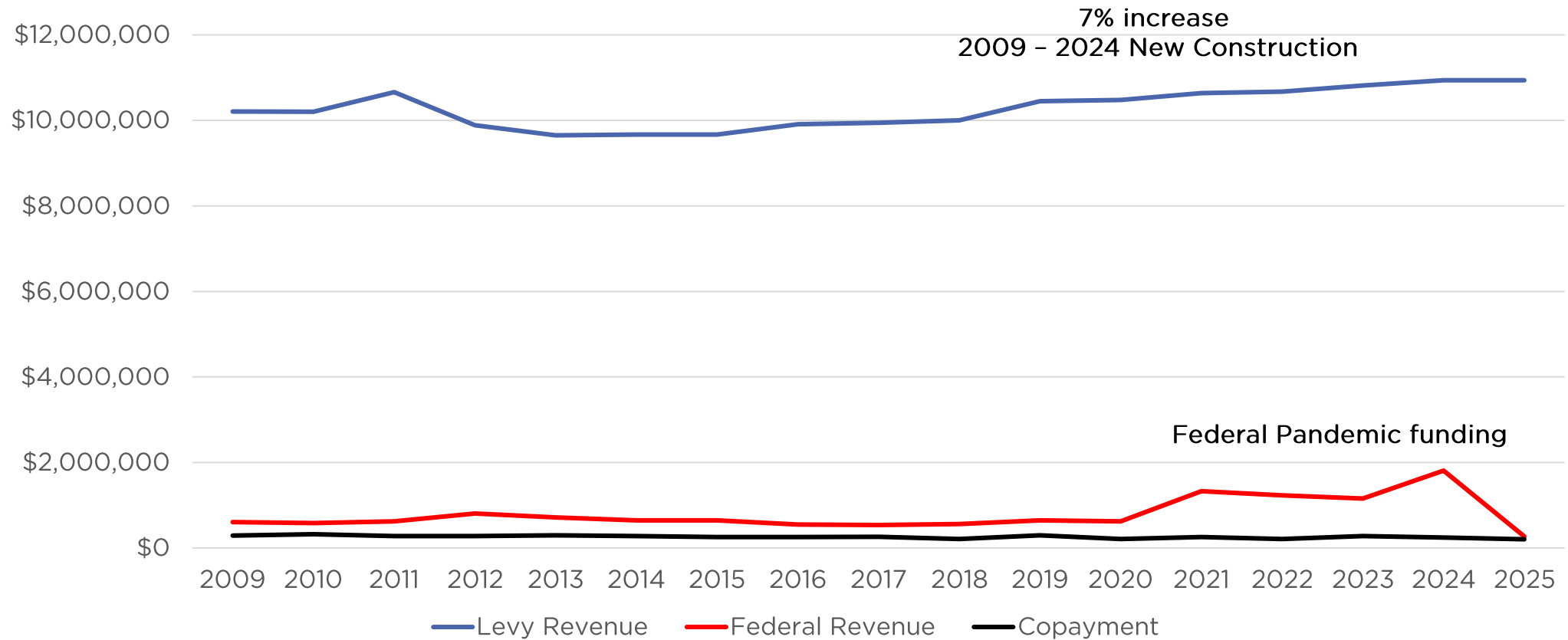
\$1 million fund balance at end of 2025
= only one month of operating reserve

1.3 Mils currently. However, the effective millage is only 0.74.

Effective millage drops as property values increase.

Increases in collections comes from new construction, not increases in property values.

Annual Levy Revenue



Scripps Gerontology Center Miami University

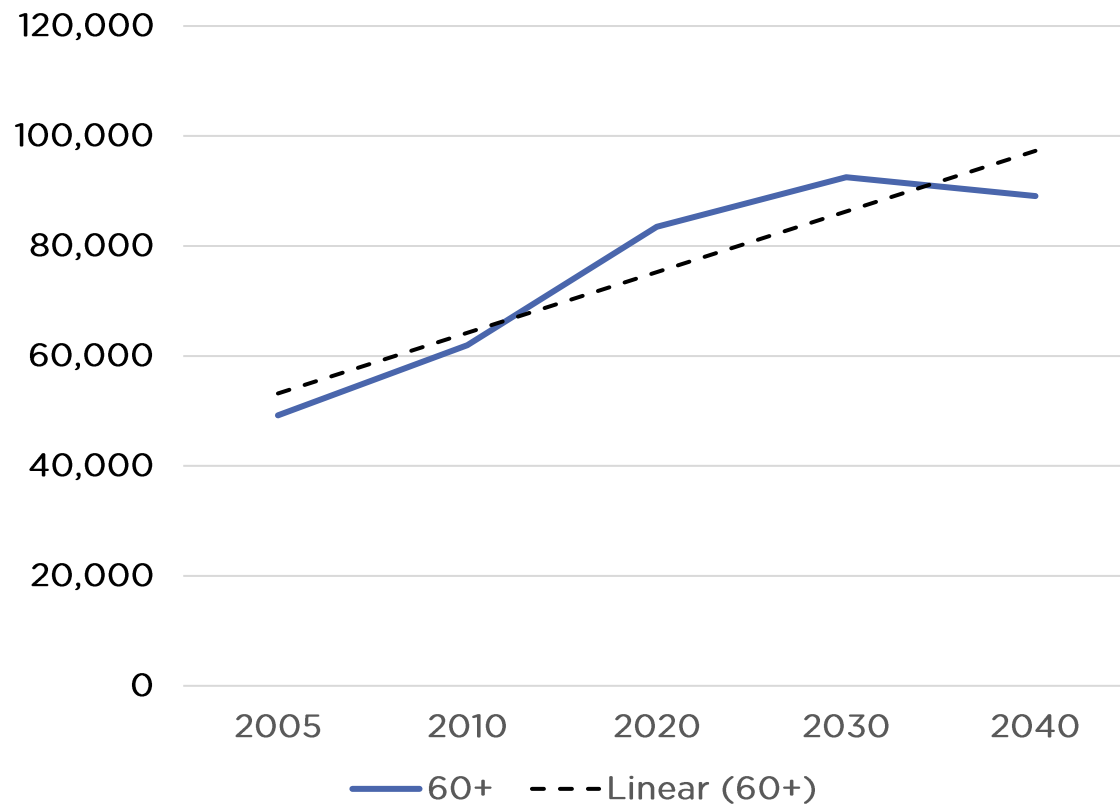
- 2024 study of older adult population growth in Butler County
- The 85+ population is increasing by 36% (2,247) between 2020 and 2040
- Four in 10 live alone, one in seven live at 150% or below of poverty, and one in five homeowners and half of all renters pay more than 30% of income for housing.



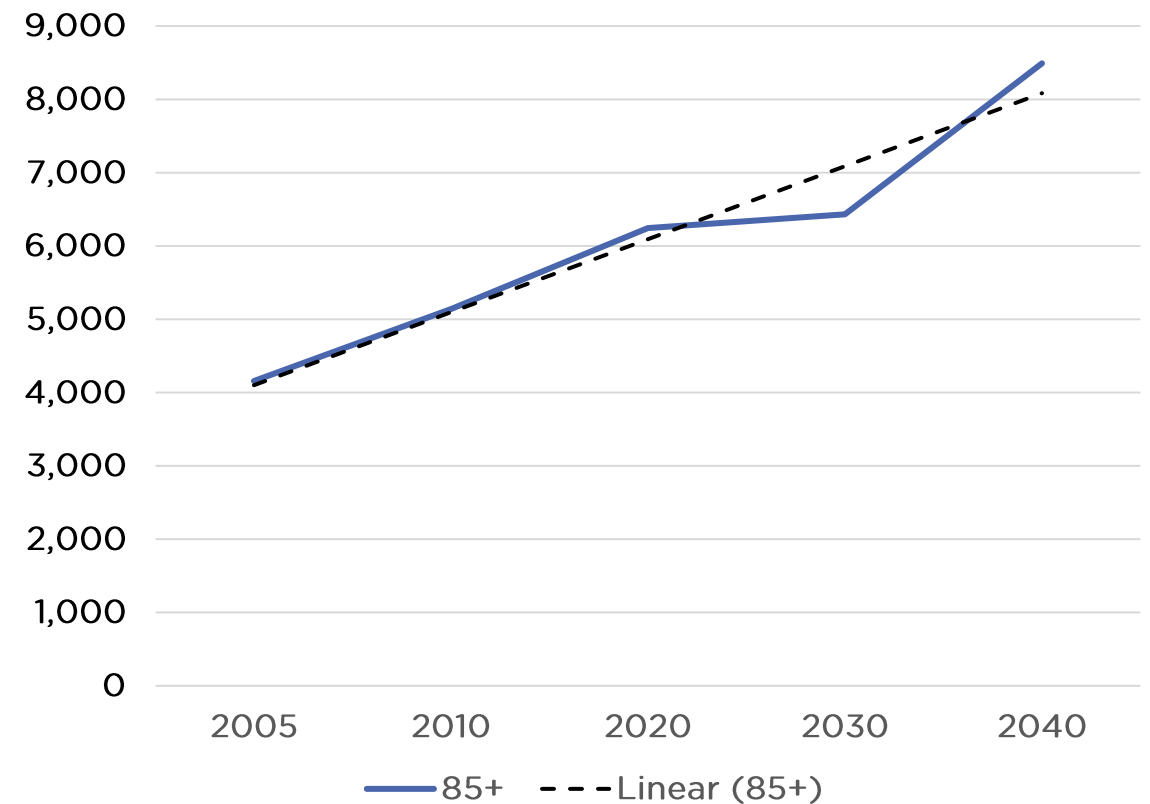
Population Growth

Scripps Gerontology, Miami University

60+ Butler County Population Growth



85+ Butler County Population Growth



2005 – 2025 Facts

- Butler County's 60+ population has grown 79% (38,792), the 85 and older group has increased by 52% (2,179), per Scripps Gerontology
- Total clients served in Butler County has increased 50% (1,365)
- Cost per client increased only 18%, or \$66 (from \$359 to \$425) -- despite 62% inflation over the same time period.
- Federal funding decreased significantly in 2025. The future of Federal funding is uncertain.



How have we managed this long?

Council on Aging's Guiding Principle:

Provide the highest quality services, at the lowest possible cost, to serve as many Butler County residents as possible.

"I am just so grateful to be able to sleep in my own bed, sit in my own chair, and use my own shower at my own pace and in my own time." Vereline, ESP client

How have we managed this long?

Reduced costs with competition and innovation

- Clustering services: bidding rates by building and zones
- Volume discounts: electronic monitoring systems RFP
 - ESP contracted rate: \$19/month
 - Medicaid rate: \$32.95/month
 - Market rate: \$37.50/month
- Star value rating system to incentivize lower cost, higher quality meals
- Innovative Laundry Service instead of using home care aides (\$16.25 vs. \$51.04 per week)

Payer of last resort

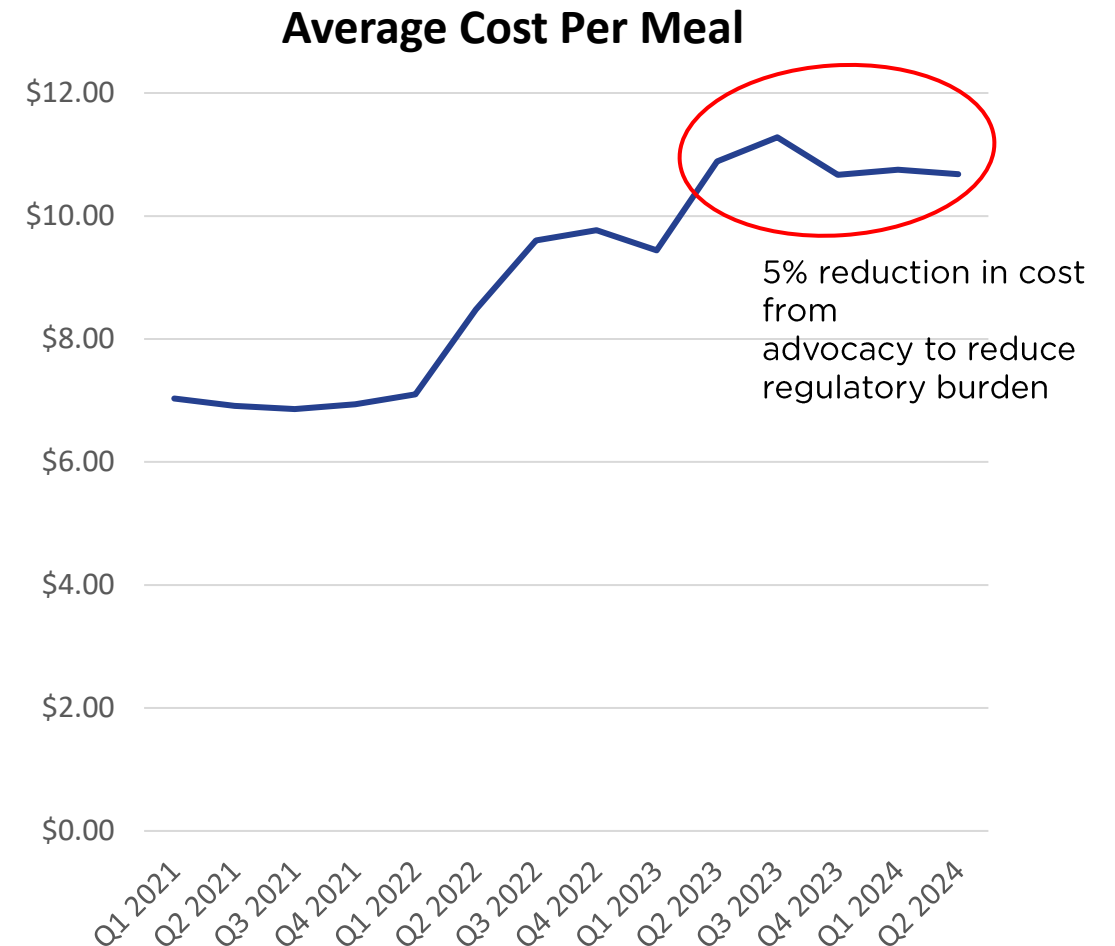
- Adapted to complicated Medicare Advantage Plan benefits, connected older adults to new benefits they were eligible to receive.
- Medicare Advantage Plans- transportation and emergency response devices. The savings to the levy during 2024 was \$120,787.

How have we managed this long?

- Eligibility criteria have been refined to focus on individuals with greater needs, including the launch of managed enrollment beginning in February 2024, specifically targeting those who are most at risk.
- As a result, 366 older adults will not receive support in 2024. For instance, we were unable to assist:
 - ✓ An 86-year-old woman living alone with a low income, who requires an emergency medical response system due to her high risk of falling.
 - ✓ An older male resident seeking assistance with meals because he struggles with grocery shopping and meal preparation.
- FastTrack Home is a short-term program aimed at older adults recovering from hospital stays or nursing home placements.
 - ✓ This program provides essential support to older adults and their caregivers during critical times.
 - ✓ In 2024, FastTrack assisted 8% of ESP clients while accounting for only 3% of the total costs.

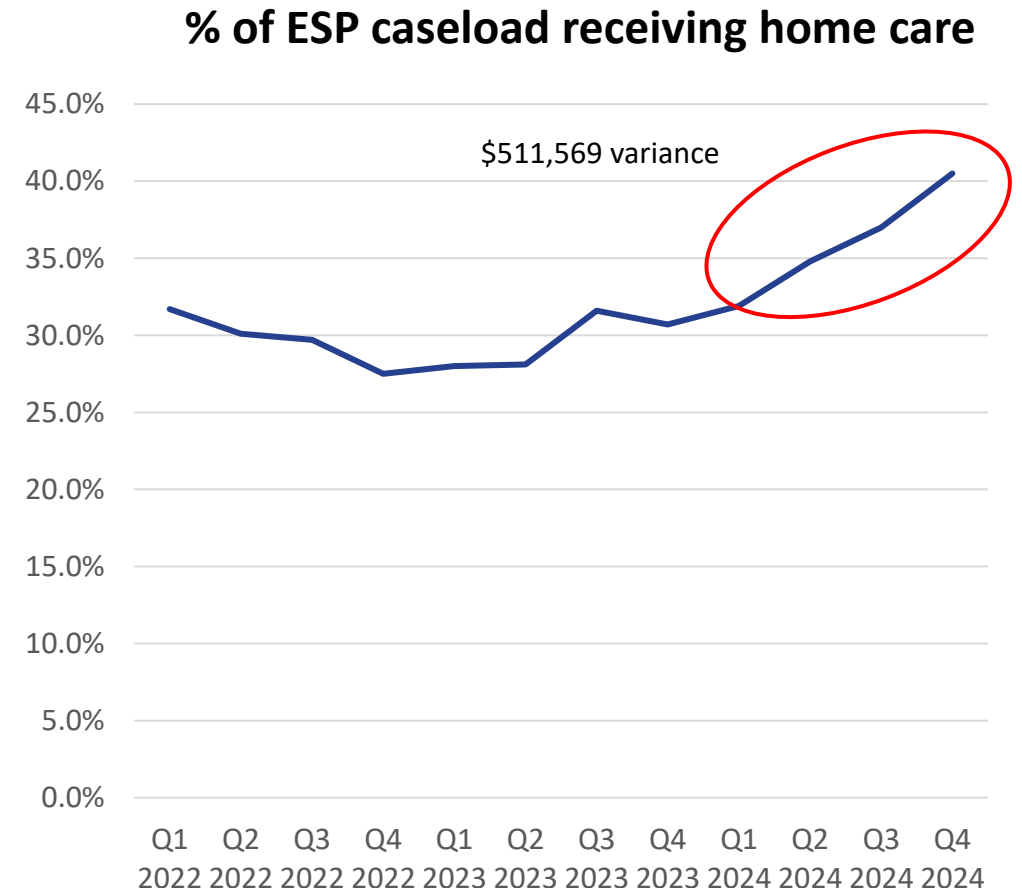
Recent inflation has impacted costs

- Home Delivered Meals currently account for 32% of the levy expenses
- Inflation during 2021/2022 dramatically increased cost by 37%.
- The closure of Central Connections bumped up costs by another 10%
- Led advocacy with the Governor's common-sense initiative that relieved regulatory burdens impacting meals. This resulted in a 5% savings in Butler County during 2023/2024



Recent improvements in labor pool has increased home care costs

- Includes:
 - Homemaking and personal care aides
 - Consumer Directed Care including AddnAide
 - Laundry Delivery
- Staffing shortages have plagued this industry for years. Further exacerbated by the pandemic.
- The number of older adults waiting for home care dropped during 2024 from 525 to less than 215.
- The % of enrolled clients receiving home care rose from 28% to 37% during 2024.

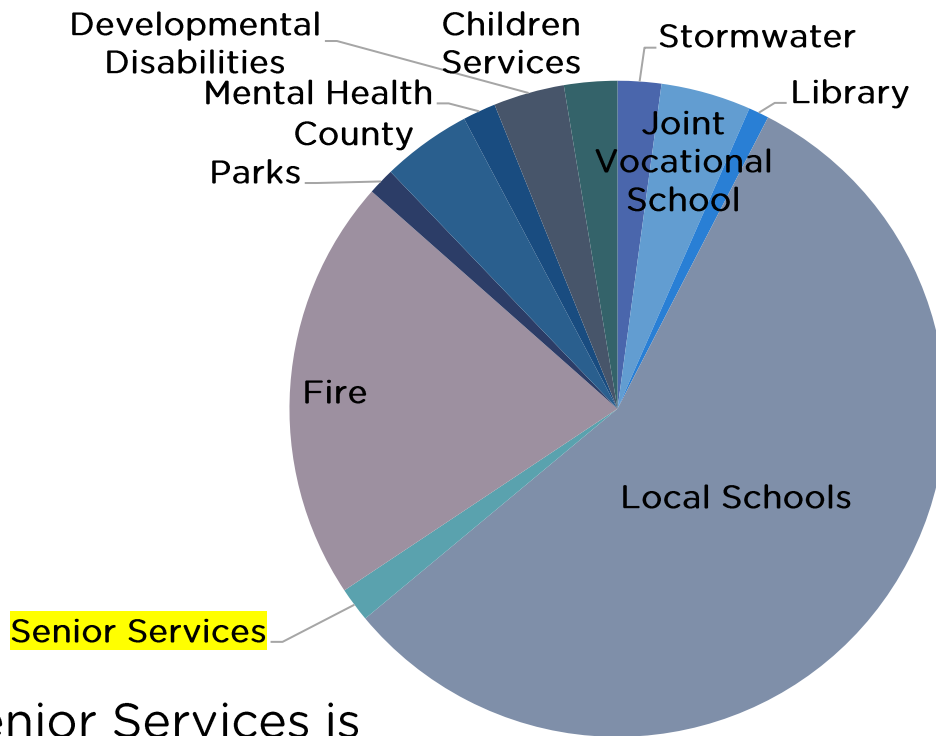


Butler County has the lowest 60+ Per Capita Funding from levies in SW OH



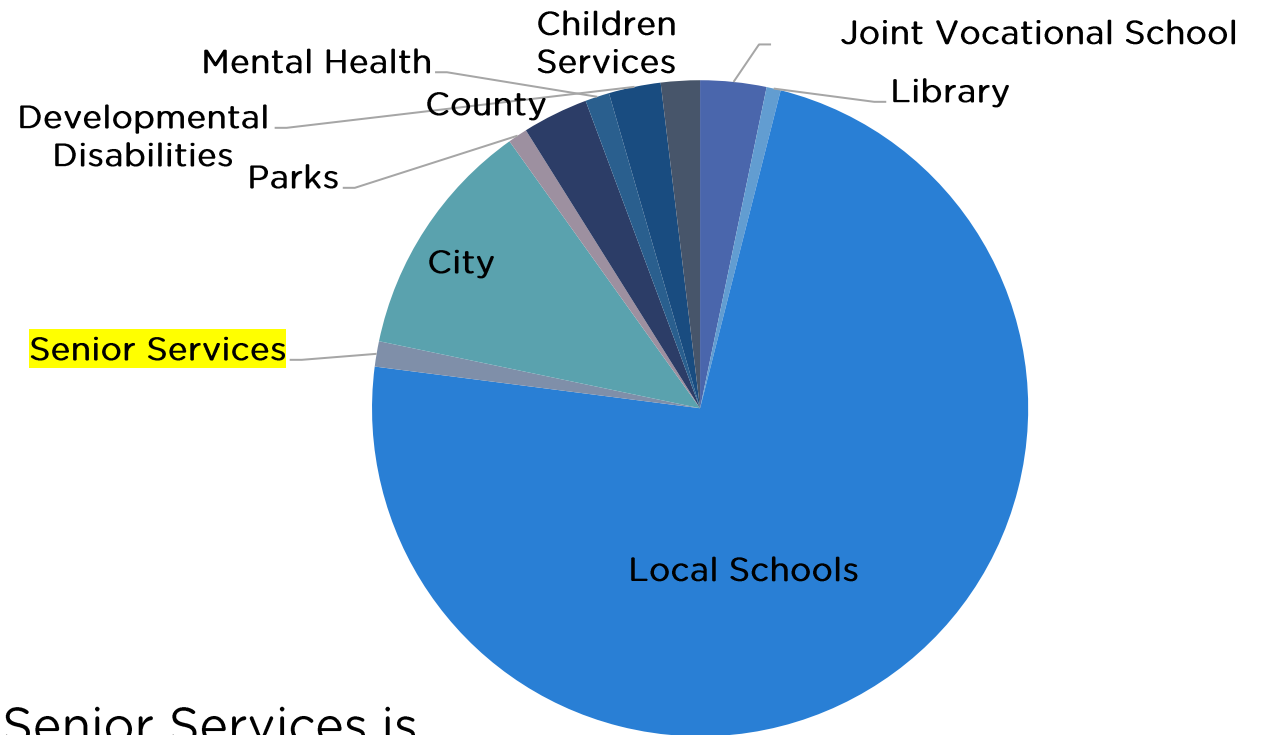
* 2024 Levy collections divided by 2020 60+ census

A Fairfield Township Property Tax Bill



Senior Services is 1.7% of the total.

A Middletown Property Tax Bill



Senior Services is 1.2% of the total.

Levy Options:



Renewal of 1.3 mill

- Generates \$10.9M annually
- No increase in taxes
- Would require a dramatic restructuring of the program.
- Serves **2,298** older adults by 2030



1.3 mill renewal and a .52 mill increase (+\$6M).

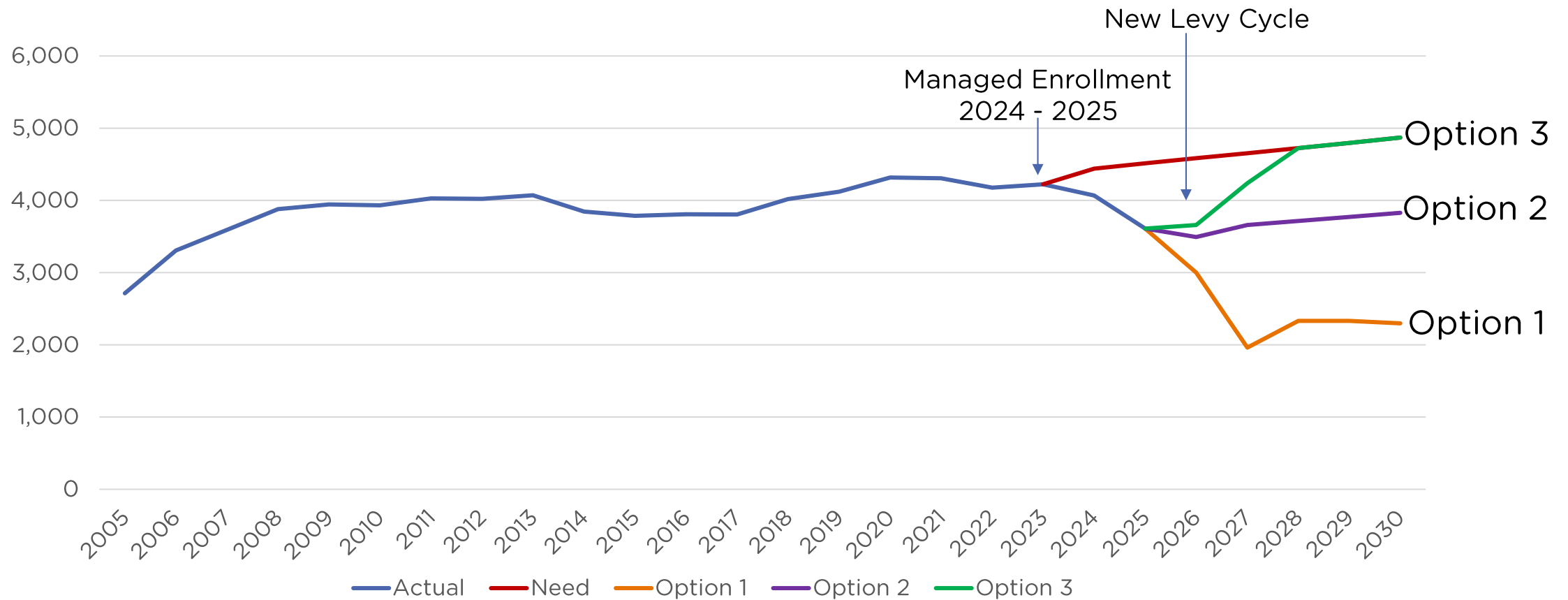
- Generates \$16.9M annually
- Would require several program modifications
- Serves **3,828** older adults by 2030



1.3 mill renewal and a .79 mill increase (+\$9.5M).

- Generates \$20.4M annually
- Funds growing needs over the 2026-2030 cycle.
- Serves **4,870** older adults by 2030

Total Served by Levy Option



Other Savings Options

Collect more copayments

- Testing a modernized copayment model to increase revenue to support the program.
 - Includes assets in addition to income in copayment calculation.
 - Fixed predictable monthly payment.
 - Higher % with a copayment (currently 35%)
 - Higher copayment amount

Modify ESP eligibility

- Tighter limits on program and service eligibility
- Lower cost caps
- Require higher level of care criteria to be eligible

Structure levy programs to focus on short-term needs to impact more older adults

Elderly Services Program (traditional program):

Long-Term chronic needs: 3 years **(length on program)**
Primary aim: decreasing risk of nursing home placement
60+, chronic functional impairments, copayment requirement
Full array of community services to maintain independence. Length of stay is 3 years.
Total cost per person: \$16,200 (3 years)

FastTrack Home:

Short-Term acute needs: up to 60 days
Successful recovery at home
Transitioning from a hospital or nursing facility, 60+ with acute functional impairments
Short term services focused on patient transition, meals/nutrition, home care, medical devices, and transportation. Length of stay is 2 months.
Total cost per person: \$1,600 (60 days)

Steps to Stability:

Short-Term or one-time service needs.
Focus on low-income older adults. No, or limited functional impairment requirements.
Home repair or modification, Short term package of home delivered meals or transportation.
Total cost per person: \$3,040 (one-time)



2024

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Butler County
*Elderly Services
Program*



Welcome

As chair of the Butler County Elderly Services Program (ESP) Advisory Council, I am pleased to share with you our program's 2024 Annual Report. In 2024, ESP, which is funded by the county's senior services tax levy, served 4,079 of our friends, neighbors and loved ones.

2024 was a challenging year for ESP. Because of rising demand for services and shrinking federal funding, this advisory council and the program's administrator, Council on Aging (COA), worked together to stretch funding as we entered the final years of the tax levy's funding cycle.

For example, we began managing ESP enrollment to focus on serving community members most at risk for nursing home placement. While this meant redirecting some people to other community resources, it also prevented the need to close the program to new enrollments.

We also sought innovative cost savings that would help us bring the benefits of the senior services levy to more people. You can read more about these efforts elsewhere in this report:

- A competitive bidding process for Electronic Monitoring Service allowed COA to leverage regional volume and lower costs. This process resulted in \$386,200 in savings for our program, bringing in a monthly service rate of \$19 – a rate 42% lower than the Medicaid rate.
- A new laundry delivery service is saving about \$35 per week per client, compared to traditional laundry service provided by home health aides.
- Following ESP's payor of last resort model, we saved \$120,787 in 2024 by helping clients access benefits provided and paid for by Medicare.
- COA-led advocacy with Ohio's Common Sense Initiative relieved regulatory burdens impacting home-delivered meals, resulting in 5% savings for Butler County ESP.

- FastTrack Home became a permanent program model in 2024 and is helping county residents access short-term care to support recovery at home during transitions from hospitals and nursing homes. FastTrack Home served 8% of ESP clients but accounted for only 3% of program costs.
- Butler County's share of state-issued Healthy Aging grants brought new and existing services to more than 1,600 older adults.

This savings and innovation comes at a critical time. In recent years, in-home care costs in ESP have been low because there were not enough workers to meet the demand. This trend is now reversing, resulting in higher costs. Federal funding has also declined significantly now that all pandemic-related funding has been spent.

Looking ahead, 2025 will be a pivotal year for ESP. The senior services tax levy will expire at the end of the year and must be renewed by voters if it is to continue. It's been 20 years since the last increase in the levy. Over that same time period, the population of people age 60 and over in the county has grown 79% and inflation has increased 62%.

This advisory council will work with COA and Butler County Commissioners to find the best path forward. I urge you to read this report to learn more about the many ways the levy and ESP support family caregivers and help Butler County older adults remain safe and independent in their homes. I truly believe ESP strengthens our county and helps to make it a great place for people of all ages to live and thrive. Thank you for your support.



Jennifer Heston-Mullins

Chair, Butler County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council

ESP is a Community Partnership

Butler County Commissioners

Donald L. Dixon, President; T.C. Rogers, Vice President; Cindy Carpenter, Member

Butler County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council

Jennifer Heston-Mullins, President; Jennifer Roth, Vice President; Michael Berding; Cara Brown; Shawn Cowan; Tresea Hall; Kevin Kurpieski; Laura Lacy; Emily Liechty; Sherry Lind; John McCarthy; Amy Simpson; Sherrill Swann; Nancy Williams

Administered by Council on Aging

4601 Malsbary Road, Blue Ash, OH 45242

(513) 721-1025, (800) 252-0155 www.help4seniors.org

Intake and Care Management by LifeSpan Community First Solutions

1900 Fairgrove Ave., Hamilton, OH 45011

(513) 868-9281, (800) 215-5305 www.community-first.org





2024

Client Stats

Butler County ESP clients are caught in the middle: with income too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to pay for private in-home care. They need help with basic activities like personal care and transportation. Between raising a family and going to work, family members help as much as they can, but ESP fills in gaps in care so our older neighbors and loved ones can continue to live independently in their homes and communities. ESP is a program that benefits our entire community.

4,079 Clients Served



68%
FEMALE



32%
MALE



54%
LIVE ALONE



\$377
MONTHLY
OUT-OF-POCKET
MEDICAL EXPENSES



83%
AGE 70+ (15 100+)



\$2,092
MEAN MONTHLY
INCOME



1,236
AVERAGE DAYS
ON THE PROGRAM

Demographic data includes individuals enrolled in ESP and FastTrack Home only.



Success Stories

To read these full success stories and more,
scan the code with your mobile device or visit
www.help4seniors.org/bcesp2024

Grants support transitional care needs of Butler County older adults

FastTrack Home is now a permanent fixture in Butler County, thanks in part to grants from the McCullough-Hyde Foundation and the state of Ohio. The program provides temporary supportive services when many older adults need them most – as they leave a hospital or nursing home. In 2024, the program helped more than 300 county residents recover at home, including Bill. “Once you’re able to take care of yourself, it’s great,” Bill said. “I hate to depend on somebody else. I think we all do.”



Healthy Aging grant helps fill unmet needs of Butler County older adults

In 2023, Butler County commissioners received nearly \$1 million from the state’s Healthy Aging grant to support programs and services to keep at-risk older adults in their homes and communities. Council on Aging worked with county commissioners and the ESP Advisory Council to develop a plan to use the grant dollars to address some of the most urgent, unmet needs in the county, including utility assistance, home repairs and modifications and emergency housing assistance. COA successfully delivered the services supported by the grant, serving more than 1,600 older adults.



Clients count on each other and ESP

Former spouses Ann and Don remained friends and decided to move in together to save money and look out for each other – they both have COPD. “We were each paying around \$700 for our own places so it made sense,” Ann said. “When you’re living on a fixed income, every bit of savings counts.” In addition to the support they provide for each other, Tina, their Butler County ESP home health aide, is another important support person in their lives.



Competitive bidding yields big savings for ESP

As ESP’s administrator, Council on Aging’s goal is to contract with the highest quality providers at the lowest possible price to serve as many individuals as possible with the tax dollars available. A competitive bidding process completed in 2024 for Electronic Monitoring Systems is yielding nearly \$400,000 in savings for Butler County ESP.



Advocacy efforts benefit older adults and service providers

As the Area Agency on Aging for Butler County, Council on Aging advocates on behalf of older adults and the provider network that serves them. In 2024, COA’s advocacy efforts focused on initiatives that reduced costs, eliminated regulatory burden, eased service access for clients and provided community education regarding senior service tax levies.



Scripps Gerontology Center completes study of Butler County aging population

In 2024, Council on Aging contracted with Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University to evaluate Butler County’s older adult population. In their report, researchers noted that since the last senior services tax levy increase in 2005, the county’s 60 and older population has increased 70% and the 85 and older age group has grown by 50%. The evaluation will help determine the future of ESP and the tax levy that funds it.

Expenses + Revenue

How tax dollars are spent

ESP would not exist without the generous support of voters. A county tax levy in place since 1996 accounts for 84% of ESP's funding. The most recent tax levy was approved by 77% of voters in 2020. The 1.3-mill levy costs property owners \$39.81 per \$100,000 of property valuation annually. COA's goal is to ensure the highest quality services at the lowest cost in order to serve as many people as possible with the tax dollars available.

As the Area Agency on Aging for southwestern Ohio, including Butler County, COA leverages state and federal funding to cover 7% of ESP expenses. Additional funding comes from voluntary client donations and client co-payments.

Revenue

Federal, State and Other Grants (via Council on Aging)	\$944,337
Client Donations and Co-payments	\$344,792
Title XX	\$200,407
Healthy Aging Grants	\$955,927
Butler County Elderly Services Levy	\$13,032,987
TOTAL REVENUE	\$15,478,450

Expenses

SERVICE	CLIENTS SERVED	SERVICE UNITS	COST
Care Management	3,820	36,170 months	\$2,682,326
Home-Delivered Meals ¹	2,163	415,332 meals	\$4,551,442
Electronic Monitoring Systems	1,992	21,017 months	\$405,396
Home Care Assistance	1,088	85,822 hours	\$2,321,944
Transportation	416	11,480 one-way trips	\$646,560
Healthy Aging ¹⁵	400	N/A	\$58,851
Consumer-Directed Care	361	90,329 hours	\$1,756,263
Home Medical Equipment	352	772 items	\$127,058
FastTrack Home Care Transitions ¹	327	801 months	\$242,580
Independent Living Assistance ¹²	301	4,217 hours	\$250,206
Minor Home Repairs	219	247 jobs	\$471,162
Behavioral Health Services (Uplift) ¹	120	N/A	\$152,837
Title XX Home Care ³	53	25,286 hours	\$200,407
Environmental Services ⁴	42	154 jobs	\$55,095
Laundry Service	42	1,036 jobs	\$30,234
Adult Day Services	36	1,692 days	\$161,318
Adult Day Transportation	13	1,202 one-way trips	\$41,838
Overnight Respite ³	8	67 nights	\$61,723
Kinship Meals ³	6	1,225 meals	\$2,495
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$932,106
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$326,611
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$15,478,450

Additional Expenses

¹ Services funded in whole or in part by Healthy Aging Grant

² Help with benefit applications and organizing personal and household records

³ Service funded in whole or in part by Federal Older Americans Act, drawn down by Council on Aging

⁴ Pest control, major housekeeping and waste removal

⁵ Home modifications, utility assistance, emergency rental assistance and digital literacy services funded by Healthy Aging Grant

Butler County Commissioners distributed funds from the senior services levy to the following organizations: Butler County Job and Family Services Adult Protective Services Unit, \$219,177; Butler County Prosecutor's Office for fraud prevention, \$196,097.

What is ESP?

The Elderly Services Program helps eligible county residents age 60 and older remain safe and independent in their homes by providing help with certain activities of daily living (bathing, cleaning, cooking, transportation and more), filling gaps in care that may already be provided by family caregivers.

ESP offers flexible care to meet clients' changing needs. Eligibility and care needs are determined during an in-home assessment by a professional care manager who coordinates and monitors clients' care. Income is not an eligibility factor for ESP, but some clients have a co-payment based on their income.

The program is operated by Council on Aging (COA) via a contract with Butler County Commissioners, who appoint a board to advise on program needs and policies. Provider agencies deliver ESP services under a contract with COA. ESP is a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care.

Cost to Taxpayers

\$425

Monthly costs for
ESP services

VS

\$6,000+

Monthly costs for
nursing home care

What is COA's Role in ESP?

COA's responsibilities for ESP in Butler County include program development, provider management, data analysis and reporting; financial services and oversight; information technology; quality improvement; and community engagement. As a state-designated Area Agency on Aging, COA provided these additional services in 2024:

78,165

requests for information and referral fulfilled

358

individuals in Butler County received support to transition from one care setting to another

2,137

Butler County residents received home- and community-based services through Medicaid-funded programs

\$1.1 million

in Title III funding allocated to local organizations for congregate meals, legal assistance, wellness education, caregiver support, transportation and other supportive services

Butler County ESP services are funded by a special tax levy. ESP does not supplant care provided by families but rather secures the necessary additional care the family is unable to provide.

ESP expects families to take responsibility to care for family members to the fullest extent possible. ESP does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, color, religion (creed), sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, national or ethnic origin (ancestry), marital status or disability.