

Welcome

The pandemic left its mark on all of us during 2020, but especially on older adults who were more likely to be hospitalized or die from COVID-19. Rightfully, many were afraid to leave their homes for much of the year, making the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program (ESP), and its partner organizations, an essential part of our county's response to the pandemic. ESP was a lifeline for older adults, providing food, masks, supplies and other support. For example, Hamilton County older adults received nearly 12,000 emergency food boxes (each containing a 14-day supply of food) during the pandemic.



The pandemic brought into sharp focus the enormous need for supportive services to help keep our growing older adult population safe and independent at home. ESP provides those services – meals, transportation, homemaking assistance, electronic monitoring devices, caregiver respite and more. It was especially evident here in Hamilton County in 2020, as the number of ESP enrollees increased by 18 percent over 2019.

In 2020, eligible low-income older adults in our county could for the first time receive \$50 worth of fresh produce from local farmers' markets through the USDA Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Council on Aging – ESP's administrator – worked with the Ohio Department of Aging and community leaders to launch the program. Despite the pandemic, more than 1,100 older adults in our area participated.

This report illustrates how integral ESP is to the well-being of not only older adults and their caregivers, but of our entire community. We have a lot to share with you this year – more than will fit within this paper report. I hope you will also scan the QR code to read more about our successes during such a challenging year.

Sincerely,
Rose Stertz
Chair, Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council

ESP Is a Community Partnership



Hamilton County Commissioners
Stephanie Summerow Dumas, President; Alicia Reece, Vice President; Denise Driehaus



Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council
Rose Stertz, Chair; Matthew Worth, Vice Chair; Connie Bigony; Janice Hunter; Clarissa Rentz



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What Is ESP?

The Elderly Services Program (ESP) helps eligible county residents age 60 and older to 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 by an in-home assessment and a professional care manager coordinates and monitors clients' care. Income is not an eligibility factor for ESP, but some clients have a co-payment based on their income and assets.

The program is operated by Council on Aging (COA) via a contract with Hamilton County Commissioners, who appoint a board to advise on program needs and policies. Provider agencies deliver ESP services via competitive contracts with COA. Clients, caregivers and taxpayers round out the partnership. ESP is a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care.

COST TO TAXPAYERS:

\$275

Monthly costs for ESP services

VS

\$6,000+

Monthly costs for nursing home care

What Is COA's Role?

As the program's operator, COA provides: eligibility assessments; care management; program development; provider management; data analytics; financial services; information technology; quality improvement and community engagement. As a state-designated Area Agency on Aging, COA provided these additional services to county residents in 2020:



49,574

requests for information and referral fulfilled



1,031

individuals in Hamilton County were provided support to transition from one care setting to another



\$1.95 million

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



5,396

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

HAMILTON COUNTY

Elderly Services Program

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



Client Stats

2020

Hamilton 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.

9,159

CLIENTS
SERVED



67%
FEMALE



33%
MALE



58%
LIVE ALONE

74%
AGE 70+



628 DAYS
AVERAGE TIME
ON PROGRAM



\$286/mo
OUT-OF-POCKET
MEDICAL EXPENSES

\$1,861
MEAN MONTHLY
INCOME

38%
MINORITIES

Success Stories

FastTrack Home supports older adults and caregivers during pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when nursing facilities were hot spots for outbreaks and even deaths, an innovative Council on Aging (COA) program helped area hospitals divert more than 1,800 older adults away from care facilities, to instead receive support in their homes. The program, FastTrack Home, has been available in Hamilton and Clinton counties since 2017 and expanded to Warren County in 2020.



FastTrack Home provides temporary in-home care services (transportation, meals, personal care and homemaking services) before an older adult goes home from the hospital. While other COA programs require an in-home assessment and focus on meeting long-term needs, FastTrack Home assessments are completed at the hospital bedside and are designed to meet short-term, acute needs – while recovering from an illness, injury or procedure. This distinction is key because older adults have an increased risk of illness and injury in the 30 days following hospital discharge.

COA partners with local restaurants on pandemic comfort meal program

During the pandemic, COA has partnered with many area restaurants, including minority-owned businesses, to provide special meals to area low-income older adults. In Hamilton County, partners have included major area restaurant chains, a personal chef who uses a Northside community kitchen to prepare health-conscious meals, and everything in between.



When Ohio Governor Mike DeWine issued stay-at-home orders in March 2020, COA began hearing from older adults who were afraid to go out for groceries and other necessities. Others found themselves without their regular support network. Many who contacted COA had never before needed help.

“We learned from past emergency situations that food quickly becomes an urgent need for older adults,” said COA CEO, Suzanne Burke. “We didn’t want supply chain or staffing issues to interfere with our ability to provide meals to older adults, and we knew they might be asked to shelter-in-place for quite a while.”

Farmers’ market program treats low-income older adults to fresh produce

In 2020, low-income older adults in southwestern Ohio were able to participate in the United States Department of Agriculture Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. More than 1,100 older adults in Council on Aging’s (COA) five-county service area participated in the program – 792 in Hamilton County – which provides fresh, nutritious, unprepared locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs and honey through farmers markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture (CSA) farmers.



COA’s Nutrition Business Relations Partner, Jennifer Lake, worked with community members, area farmers and the Ohio Department of Aging to secure a \$180,000 grant from Ohio’s General Revenue Fund to bring the program to the area.

In June, those who applied and qualified began to receive \$50 worth of coupons to redeem through the end of October at participating markets.

Expenses and Revenue

How tax dollars are spent

ESP would not exist without the generous support of voters. A county tax levy in place since 1996 provides 88 percent of ESP’s funding. The most recent tax levy was approved by 72 percent of voters in 2017. The 1.6-mill levy costs property owners \$40.25 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 Hamilton County, COA leverages state and federal funding to cover 10 percent of ESP expenses. Additional funding comes from voluntary client donations and client co-payments (33 percent of clients make a co-payment based on their income*).

Revenue

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$2,406,943
Client Donations and Co-payments	\$418,494
Hamilton County Elderly Services Levy	\$21,320,468
TOTAL REVENUE	\$24,145,905

Expenses

SERVICE**	CLIENTS SERVED	SERVICE UNITS	COST
Care Management	7,608	59,048 months	\$3,865,873
Home-Delivered Meals	5,023	1,077,203 meals	\$7,021,757
Home Care Assistance	4,027	330,530 hours	\$6,981,173
Electronic Monitoring System	3,809	35,352 months	\$722,740
Medical Transportation	1,163	36,983 one-way trips	\$1,095,389
FastTrack Home Care Management	915	1,229 months	\$759,325
Home Medical Equipment	849	1,369 items	\$240,294
Minor Home Repairs	333	377 repairs	\$296,008
Consumer-Directed Care	289	74,391 months	\$1,128,478
Non-Medical Transportation	277	4,332 one-way trips	\$123,791
Independent Living Assistance***	138	1,644 hours	\$121,763
Adult Day Services	104	3,450 days	\$164,002
Adult Day Transportation	52	2,098 miles	\$32,720
Environmental Services****	13	15 jobs	\$67,541
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$124,332
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$1,400,717
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$24,145,905

Additional Expenses

Hamilton County Commissioners distributed funds from the senior services levy to the following services and organizations: patient navigation, \$138,125; senior homeless medical care, \$184,517; Hamilton County Job and Family Services Adult Protective Unit, \$391,574; Hamilton County Veterans Service Commission, \$250,000.

*When calculating the percent of clients who have a copayment, individuals who receive only home-delivered meals are excluded because Federal requirements prohibit charging a copayment for this service. The percent of clients with a copayment is higher in 2020 because more individuals received home-delivered meals as their only service due to the pandemic.

**Services listed in order of clients served.

***Help with benefit applications and organizing personal and household records.

****Pest control, major housekeeping and waste removal.

To read these full success stories and more, scan the code with your mobile device or visit www.help4seniors.org/HCESP2020



Hamilton 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.