



2025

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Hamilton County

ESP



Welcome

As chair of the Hamilton County ESP Advisory Council, I am pleased to share our program's 2025 Annual Report. In 2025, ESP and the senior services tax levy that funds it served 8,484 of our friends, neighbors and loved ones.

I have good news to report: In May 2025, we were able to lift enrollment restrictions that had been in place since 2023. Though the program was not closed to new enrollments during this time, enrollment was limited to serving those most at risk for nursing home placement. Rising demand and increased costs for service delivery necessitated the enrollment restrictions. By doing so, this advisory council and ESP's administrator, Council on Aging (COA), were able to keep the program within budget while ensuring ESP served those most in need of care.

Over the last few years, care management staff have worked hard to reduce program costs without sacrificing client care so enrollment restrictions could be lifted. They achieved this by helping clients enroll in other benefit programs, such as through their Medicare Advantage plans or the VA, as well as transferring clients to other home- and community-based programs when their needs or eligibility status changed.

Because ESP is funded by the county's senior services tax levy, the advisory council works with COA to use tax dollars efficiently and serve as many eligible residents as possible. In 2025, we updated ESP's cost sharing process and piloted a new model that more

accurately reflects clients' service use, income, assets and expenses. As a result, cost share participation increased from 26% to 46%, and the new flat monthly payment makes budgeting easier for clients on fixed incomes. Cost sharing payments are reinvested in the program to help ESP serve more people.

STEPS to Stability, created by COA in 2024 in partnership with Hamilton County, helps older adults who can't get support through other programs. Designed to meet emergent or short-term needs, in 2025, it provided nearly \$1 million in utility relief and \$929,000 for urgent home repairs and modifications that helped older adults remain safely at home.

There's much more to share with you in this report, including awards, community partnerships, client stories and new care options for our county's older adults. Please take a moment to review our report. I think you'll come away with a better understanding of how ESP serves our entire community. As always, thank you for your continued support of Hamilton County ESP.



Janice Hunter
Chair, Hamilton County
ESP Advisory Council

ESP is a Community Partnership

Hamilton County Commissioners

Stephanie Summerow Dumas, President
Alicia Reece, Vice President
Denise Driehaus, Commissioner



Hamilton County ESP Advisory Council

Janice Hunter, Chair; Dimity Orlet, Vice Chair; Angele Blackshear; Viola Brown; Randi Burlew; Janine Gage; April Harper; Holly Mundon



Administered by Council on Aging

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2025 Client Stats

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.

8,484 Clients Served



68%
FEMALE



32%
MALE

48%
MINORITIES



59%
LIVE ALONE



\$525
MONTHLY
OUT-OF-POCKET
MEDICAL EXPENSES



78%
AGE 70+ (39 100+)



\$1,845
MEAN MONTHLY
INCOME



590
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/hcesp2025

home52 Transportation and ESP keep Cincinnati grandmother moving

Juanita doesn't like to sit still. She worked on her feet for 21 years before retiring about 10 years ago. "I like the action. I don't like to sit down all day," she said. Health challenges in recent years have slowed her down a bit and kept her from driving, but they haven't kept her stuck at home. An ESP client, Juanita qualified for rides offered through home52 Transportation — a service of Council on Aging subsidiary home52.



Program provides home modifications and utility bill relief to county older adults

STEPS to Stability, a program created by Council on Aging in 2024, helps address common, one-time needs that can impact older adults' ability to remain independent. It meets needs that cannot be addressed by other programs and funding sources. In 2025, via the senior services levy, grants and ARPA funding provided by Hamilton County, the program provided nearly \$2 million in assistance to more than 2,000 individuals for home repairs and modifications and utility assistance. Pat, from Roselawn, received a new furnace through the program. "I was so grateful to be warm this winter," she said.

COA partners with 513Relief Bus to connect county older adults to resources

Since 2023, staff from Council on Aging's Aging and Disability Resource Center have been traveling the county on the 513Relief Bus, connecting older adults to programs, services and supports that can help them remain independent in their homes and communities. The bus — a mobile medical and social services bus — is an outgrowth of 513Relief.org, created by Hamilton County Commissioner Alicia Reece during the pandemic. In 2025, COA staff were on the bus 44 times — including at a special September event focused exclusively on older adults and caregivers — with hundreds of older adults receiving referrals or connections to community resources.



Hamilton County ESP adopts new cost sharing model

Hamilton County ESP has implemented a new cost sharing model designed to simplify billing, improve consistency and better align costs with the financial realities faced by older adults. The previous percentage based model often produced unpredictable monthly bills due to fluctuating service use, provider billing cycles and complex calculations. By shifting to a flat monthly cost share and introducing a streamlined tool for real-time calculation, the new model reduces administrative burden while offering clients greater clarity and stability. Initial results indicate notable increases in participation and revenue, as well as better alignment with individuals' financial ability to contribute.

Use the QR code at the top of this page to read more, including these additional stories:

- TriHealth, COA partner to bring new options to Hamilton County older adults
- For a Hamilton County daughter and caregiver, support provides quality bonus time at end of life
- AddnAide receives McKnight's Excellence in Technology Award

Expenses + Revenue

How tax dollars are spent

ESP exists thanks to the generosity of county voters. A tax levy in place since 1992 provides 96% of ESP's funding. The current 1.6-mill levy was approved by 78% of voters in 2022. It costs property owners less than \$34 per \$100,000 of property valuation annually.

As Hamilton County's Area Agency on Aging, COA leverages state and federal funding and seeks alternative funding to help offset costs to the levy. Additional funding comes from client cost sharing and voluntary client donations. COA's goal: ensure the highest quality services at the lowest cost to serve as many people as possible with the tax dollars available.

Revenue

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$927,814
Client Donations and Cost Sharing	\$365,318
Hamilton County Senior Services Levy	\$28,711,682
TOTAL REVENUE	\$30,004,814

Expenses

SERVICE	CLIENTS SERVED	SERVICE UNITS	COST
Care Management	5,453	47,163 months	\$4,471,374
Home-Delivered Meals ¹	3,029	648,198 meals	\$6,244,275
Home Care Assistance	2,485	270,787 hours	\$7,522,393
Electronic Monitoring Systems	2,484	22,216 months of rentals	\$442,607
STEPS to Stability ²	2,080	2,499 repairs and utility credits	\$1,983,109
FastTrack Home Care Transitions ¹	1,650	4,661 months	\$1,493,621
Transportation	1,019	31,236 one-way trips	\$1,678,713
Home Medical Equipment	904	1,586 items	\$213,331
Consumer-Directed Care	488	109,546 hours	\$2,240,801
Behavioral Health ⁵	209	N/A	\$77,577
Laundry Service	185	3,999 jobs	\$214,587
Minor Home Repairs	131	152 repairs	\$278,398
Independent Living Assistance ³	111	1,817 hours	\$203,530
Adult Day Services ¹	71	4,210 days	\$410,179
Medical Recovery and Extended Care Services	48	1,431 bed nights	\$300,000
Adult Day Transportation	37	3,302 one-way trips	\$85,115
Overnight Respite ¹	33	199 nights	\$73,367
Environmental Services ⁴	27	56 jobs	\$38,075
Kinship Meals ⁵	6	730 meals	\$10,558
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$1,827,150
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$284,190
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$30,004,814

¹ Service funded in whole or in part by Federal Older Americans Act, drawn down by Council on Aging.

² Funded in part by senior services tax levy. For 2025, program included home repairs and utility assistance.

³ Help with benefit applications and organizing personal and household records.

⁴ Pest control, major housekeeping and waste removal.

⁵ Funded by Federal Older Americans Act, drawn down by Council on Aging. Levy dollars were not used for this service.

Additional Expenses

Hamilton County Commissioners distributed funds from the senior services levy to the following services and organizations: Care for Caregivers, \$139,742; Hamilton County Job and Family Services Adult Protective Unit, \$400,000; Hamilton County Veterans Service Commission, \$99,901.

What is ESP?

ESP helps eligible county residents age 60 and older remain safe and independent in their homes, providing help with activities of daily living (bathing, cleaning, cooking, transportation and more), and 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 cost share based on their income and assets.

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

Cost to Taxpayers

\$525	VS	\$8,000+
Monthly costs for ESP services		Monthly costs for nursing home care

What is COA's Role in ESP?

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 2025:

85,364
requests for information and referral fulfilled

2,096
individuals in Hamilton County received support to transition from one care setting to another

5,302
Hamilton County residents received home- and community-based services through Medicaid funded programs

1,866
eligible Hamilton County older adults enrolled in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

10
Hamilton County veterans received care management support to help them receive self-directed in-home care through the Veteran Directed Care Program

\$2.4 million
in Title III funding allocated to local organizations for congregate meals, legal assistance, wellness education, caregiver support, transportation and other supportive services

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.