



# Hamilton County's Elderly Services Program



2015 Annual Report



## About the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program

The Hamilton County Elderly Services program helps older adults remain independent within the familiar surroundings of their own homes for as long as possible.

Nursing homes are often necessary, but most people do not want to go there before their time. With the help of services such as home-delivered meals and personal care, many older adults can delay or prevent nursing home placement.

Of all the options for long-term care, in-home care is also the least expensive. It costs about \$378 a month per client in Hamilton County ESP, compared to more than \$4,000 a month for Medicaid nursing home care.

Hamilton County's Elderly Services Program is supported by 1) a local tax levy, 2) funds distributed by Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio (COA) from Title III of the Older Americans Act, and 3) co-payments from participants who are able to contribute to the cost of their care. Donations are also accepted, but not required, for home-delivered meals.

COA administers the program under contract with Hamilton County Commissioners and works with the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council, a volunteer community advisory council.

COA handles assessment, intake, and care management. COA also processes all billing, and provides program planning, reporting, auditing, contracting and provider services, technical assistance, and community engagement activities. Organizations contract with COA to provide in-home services such as home care assistance (housekeeping help, personal care), electronic monitoring systems, and transportation.



## **Hamilton County's Elderly Services Program** Helping older adults maintain independence in their homes

**(513) 721-1025**

**(800) 252-0155**

**Credits:** This report was produced by the Communications Department of Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio. Data compiled and provided by Council on Aging's Business Intelligence and Accounting departments. Photos by Lyons Photography, COA staff, and COA providers.

## The Elderly Services Program is provided by:

### Hamilton County Commissioners:



From left to right: Dennis Deters, Chris Monzel, Todd Portune

### Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council:

The Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council is a volunteer community advisory council whose members are appointed by Hamilton County Commissioners to help with oversight of the program. Members as of 12/31/2015:

Jacqueline Kebede, Chair

Erica Riehl, Vice Chair

Gwen Bender

Andrea Herzig

Martha Jean Hill

Catherine Mills

Charlie Norman

Michael Robison

### Program Administrator:



175 Tri County Parkway  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246  
(513) 721-1025  
(800) 252-0155  
[www.help4seniors.org](http://www.help4seniors.org)

Dear Friends and Supporters,

On behalf of Hamilton County Citizens for Elderly Services, it is my pleasure to present our 2015 Annual Report.

In 2015, we helped **5,449** older adults to remain independent in their homes with services such as home-delivered meals, transportation, and home care assistance. Many of these seniors have chronic conditions that would force them into a nursing home if it were not for the Elderly Services Program.

ESP is a community program of which we can be proud. It is paid for by the citizens of Hamilton County for the benefit of our senior residents and their families. We are very grateful for this support!

As you will see in this report, our program serves people of modest means who cannot afford to pay for care, but who are not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid. Because of this program, Hamilton County is in a better position to serve the aging population than many other places around our country.

The benefits of our Elderly Services Program ripple throughout the county. It uses and helps strengthen local organizations, such as Cincinnati Area Senior Services, Inc., and a variety of home care agencies. It even indirectly helps businesses whose employees are caring for aging parents and need support with those tasks in order to remain productive in their jobs.

Unfortunately, due to demand outpacing available funding, Council on Aging has had to manage enrollment in Hamilton County ESP. By June 2013 – only a few months after voters renewed the senior service levy – we had to start a waiting list. We continually “work the list” to eliminate people who no longer need the program. This keeps the list at a manageable level and most eligible seniors are able to enroll within a few months. We also quickly enroll people who meet certain emergency criteria.

This report tells the story of the Elderly Services Program through the words and photos of two of our clients along with information such as client demographics, names of contracted providers, program outcomes, and expenses. We watch the program closely for trends and manage accordingly so that it will continue to provide compassionate, high-quality service while delivering good value for taxpayers.



*Suzanne Burke*

Suzanne Burke, CEO  
Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio

## 2015 Program Highlights

**Service improvement – home-delivered meals:** Via a bidding process for home-delivered meals contracts, Council on Aging (COA) required providers to offer therapeutic meals for clients with medical dietary needs. This is especially beneficial for people coming home from the hospital. Therapeutic meals were once available in a limited area through one provider, but are now available throughout COA's five-county region. In addition, providers must now offer hot meals as an option, or a driver who can heat a meal for a client who needs that service.

**Setting standards for quality:** Council on Aging is one of 10 organizations selected by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to participate in a national project to establish quality standards for the coordination of Long Term Services and Supports with general medical care.

**New enrollments:** In 2015, the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program had 1,548 new enrollments. This means that more than 25 percent of the total number of seniors served in 2015 were new to the program. This is especially good news because the Hamilton County program has a waiting list. COA enrolls people in certain emergency circumstances and continually enrolls others who have been waiting by “working the list” to eliminate those who no longer need services. Overall, enrollment is moderated because people continually disenroll from the program. This is primarily because they have died or need more intensive services in a nursing home or other program.

## Profile of a typical Elderly Services Program client

Because of health problems and disability, ESP clients aren't out and about as they once were. But in their younger days, they were teachers, office and factory workers, homemakers, nurses, and civic volunteers – in short, the backbone of the community. Today, the Elderly Services Program helps them preserve their independence and dignity.

The typical ESP client is a woman in her late 70s. She lives alone on a modest income of about \$19,349 a year, from which she pays \$3,192 in out-of-pocket medical costs.

Her income is too high for Medicaid, the government insurance program for the poor, but too low to allow her to hire in-home help. Her family helps, but cannot provide all the care she needs.

Because of health problems, she can no longer do certain basic activities without help, like shop for groceries or clean her house. She is prone to falling and moves about with difficulty.

From ESP, she receives an electronic monitoring system, a daily home-delivered meal, and several hours a week of housekeeping help. ESP also added grab bars in her bathroom. With the help of her family and these basic services, she avoids premature placement in a nursing home.

**Total clients served in 2015: 5,449.** In addition to the client stories presented in this report, the data on the following pages provide more detail about the type of person who receives care through Hamilton County ESP and how tax dollars are spent. Client totals on these pages may vary due to different data reporting requirements in each category. Also, percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.



*"I just love life and I love being alive. I never dreamed I was going to live this long."*

At age 102, Florence is as active and engaged with life as someone decades younger. She is part of a fast-growing segment of the older population: centenarians. In late 2015, Council on Aging had 35 people age 100 or older on the Elderly Services Program (in Butler, Clinton, Hamilton and Warren counties), including Florence. Read her story on page 8 of this report.

## Mary's story

Last October, Mary and her son David were returning home from an outing when Mary lost her balance on the front steps and fell backward, injuring her spine. She spent a month in rehab at a nursing home and still has back pain.

"The last thing I remember is David saying, 'Wait, Mom, I can help you,' and me saying, 'I don't need help,'" Mary said.

One of six children, David moved into his mother's house 12 years ago because her health was declining and she was experiencing a lot of falls. They maintain a balancing act, teetering between Mary's need for independence and her need for help.

"I love helping her, but I do have to say, I'm in the house a lot," David said. "She tells me to go out, but every time I do, I feel uncomfortable because I don't know what's going to happen. I have a girlfriend and she understands, which is good. You can get another girlfriend, but you'll never have another mother."

Mary, 80, worked many years as a cook for the Little Sisters of the Poor, St. Paul Home and also as a cashier at the Federal Reserve Bank. She married twice and both husbands have passed away. In addition to her six children, she has 19 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and four great-great grandchildren.

"My kids went to college; I'm proud of them," Mary said. "And I've got good, good grandchildren. I raised some of them and they ain't standing on no corner. They're all into something."

Through the Elderly Services Program, Mary has an emergency response device, home-delivered meals, medical transportation, and housekeeping help. David handles laundry, household chores, errands and other help for his mother, but, he said, "I try not to step on her toes too much. She likes to be independent, but she does like to be waited on too. That's OK. She's earned it. When I was growing up, we were just as poor as all our friends, but we never lived in the projects. She worked very hard for us."

Mary said she would move to supportive senior housing if she had to, but is glad that things are working out for her to stay in her own home.

"Jen (their Council on Aging care manager) has been there for us. She's been very, very helpful," David said. "We really appreciate it."



Top photo: David, Mary, and COA Care Manager Jen

## Council on Aging's role in the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program

As administrator of the Elderly Services Program in Hamilton County, Council on Aging (COA) ensures that frail seniors receive the highest quality services at the lowest cost in order to serve as many seniors as possible with the tax dollars available.

COA's responsibilities include: program design and development; contracting and provider services; data analysis and reporting; financial services and oversight; information technology; quality improvement; and community engagement.

Through these services, COA is able to:

- **Design and change programs** to fit community needs and manage costs
- **Keep costs down and quality up** through competition and contract management
- **Provide a central point of access** to information and resources
- **Help service providers improve quality and efficiency** via performance reviews, client satisfaction surveys, and a centralized client database
- **Report program performance and trends** to the public, including quarterly reports and presentations to the program's community advisory council
- **Ensure stewardship of taxpayer dollars**, including collection of client donations (for home-delivered meals) and client co-payments
- **Raise and sustain public awareness and confidence**, via informational materials, public relations, participation in community events, and community presentations

### Other services available through COA for Hamilton County residents

As the state-designated Area Agency on Aging, Council on Aging provides additional services to Hamilton County residents and their families. These include:

**Aging and Disability Resources Center:** COA's call center and "front door" to services and community resources. COA responded to more than 41,000 inquiries for help in FFY 2015. Reach the Call Center via 800-252-0155 or [www.help4seniors.org](http://www.help4seniors.org).

**Home and Community-based Services via Medicaid Waivers:** Low-income residents and taxpayers alike benefit from Medicaid-funded in-home care services that prevent unnecessary nursing home placement. Programs include PASSPORT, Assisted Living, Ohio Home Care and MyCare Ohio waivers. In 2015, 4,544 Hamilton County residents received help through these programs.

**Title III of the Older Americans Act:** COA administers this federal funding for services delivered by senior centers and other organizations that provide services such as transportation, congregate meals, caregiver support, legal help, and wellness education. Title III funding also goes to the tax levy-funded Elderly Services Program in each county. This frees up local dollars so the levy programs can serve more seniors. In 2015, Hamilton County organizations spent \$2.188 million in Title III funds allocated by COA. The bulk of the funding went to the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program, Cincinnati Area Senior Services, Mayerson Jewish Community Center, Cincinnati Recreation Commission, Hyde Park Center for Older Adults, and Pro Seniors.

**Care Transitions:** Health coaching for older adults who have been hospitalized for serious and usually chronic conditions, such as heart failure. The goal is to prevent unnecessary and costly hospital readmissions and emergency department visits. COA has a contract with the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to deliver Care Transitions to patients at nine regional hospitals. In 2015, more than 7,500 patients were accepted into COA's Care Transitions program and received a visit from a health coach. The hospital readmission rate for program participants is approximately 11 percent. This is about half the 2010 average national baseline for 30-day hospital readmissions.



Gwen was confused about her medications when she left the hospital following life-saving surgery on her neck.

*"It scared me. I wasn't sure what I should be taking and what I shouldn't be taking. Pat sat down beside me, took my hand, and told me she would walk me through everything. She didn't rush. She made me feel like I was the most important person in the world."*

Photo: Care Transitions patient, Gwen, with COA health coach, Pat

## Florence's story: Care from family and in-home services keep her living to the fullest

At age 102, Florence is as active and engaged with life as someone decades younger. Around her senior housing complex people call her Feisty Flo.

Usually gentle, as when she shares scripture passages with friends in need, she can be quite commanding in her advice to those who want to take things easy: "You can't have a good life if you don't know what's going on," she said. "You need to get off your butt!"

Although she has no serious health problems, Florence needs a wheelchair to get around and can't stand without help. Through the Consumer Directed Care option in the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program, she has an aide who helps her bathe and dress in the morning and then returns in the evening to get her ready for bed. She also does light housekeeping and grocery shopping. The aide is a family friend who was recruited by Florence's daughter, Lana.

Rising at 6:30 or 7 a.m. every day, Florence attends Bible study classes, plays chair volleyball, visits friends, helps out in the kitchen (wrapping baking potatoes in foil), and never misses a residents' meeting.

"I never take a nap," she said. "I don't want to waste my time."

Her favorite day is Wednesday, when her grandchildren and great-grandchildren come over for cards, games, cooking, and ice cream. They even dance together; the kids show Florence their moves and she joins in by kicking her legs in her wheelchair.

"I just love life and I love being alive," Florence said. "I never dreamed I was going to live this long."

Her advice for longevity? "When you get bad news, throw it over your shoulder, step on it, baby, and move on!"

Centenarians are a fast-growing segment of the older population. The number of American's age 100 or older is up by 44 percent since 2000, according to federal health officials. In late 2015, COA had 35 people age 100 or older on the Elderly Services Program.



Florence and great-granddaughter Juliann practice their dance moves.

## Teamwork improves program operations

COA has increased its investment in quality assurance and improvement, not only for our contracted providers, but for ourselves. Via chart reviews and other tools, quality analysts evaluate how well care managers and other staff are complying with a wide variety of local, state, and federal requirements as well as internal procedures.

“When people are doing their work more efficiently – not being overwhelmed by how to do it – they can spend more time with the clients,” said Quality Analyst Mary Kirsch.

In the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program (ESP), for example, Kirsch, Operations Analyst Mary Martin, Manager Kim Clark, and the ESP care management teams have worked together to simplify policies (reducing from a cumbersome manual to two pages); improve case documentation; and develop new policies for services that needed more consistent application.

“We’ve been using (COA’s new intranet) to ask questions and get feedback and ideas from the team,” Clark said. “People are really participating. I’ve encouraged them to use one of our leadership skills which is to challenge the process.”



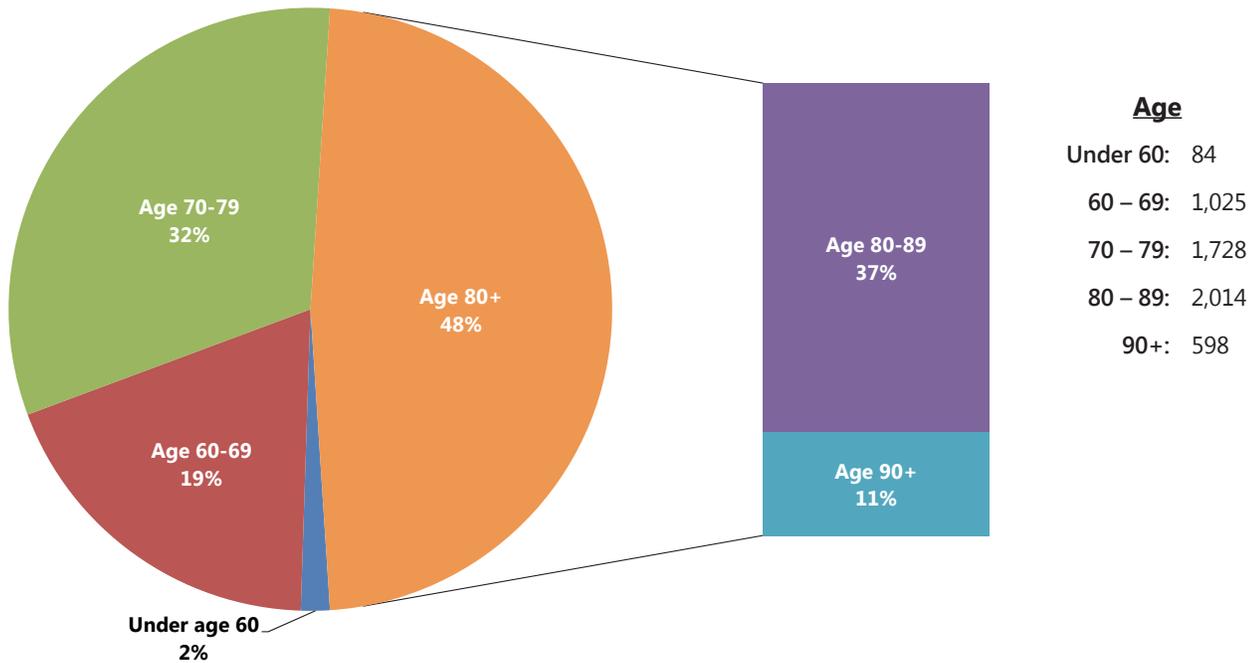
Operations Analyst Mary Martin (back left), Quality Analyst Mary Kirsch, and ESP Manager Kim Clark (seated, front)

## Where Clients Live

Jurisdiction	Clients Served	Jurisdiction	Clients Served
Cincinnati	2,959	Norwood	102
Green Township	226	Harrison	101
Colerain Township	221	Cheviot	85
Delhi Township	149	North College Hill	73
Mount Healthy	146	Sycamore Township	71
Anderson Township	130	Reading	68
Springfield Township	123	Sharonville	54
Forest Park	117	Other	708
Springdale	116		
<b>Total Clients Served in Hamilton County</b>		<b>5,449</b>	

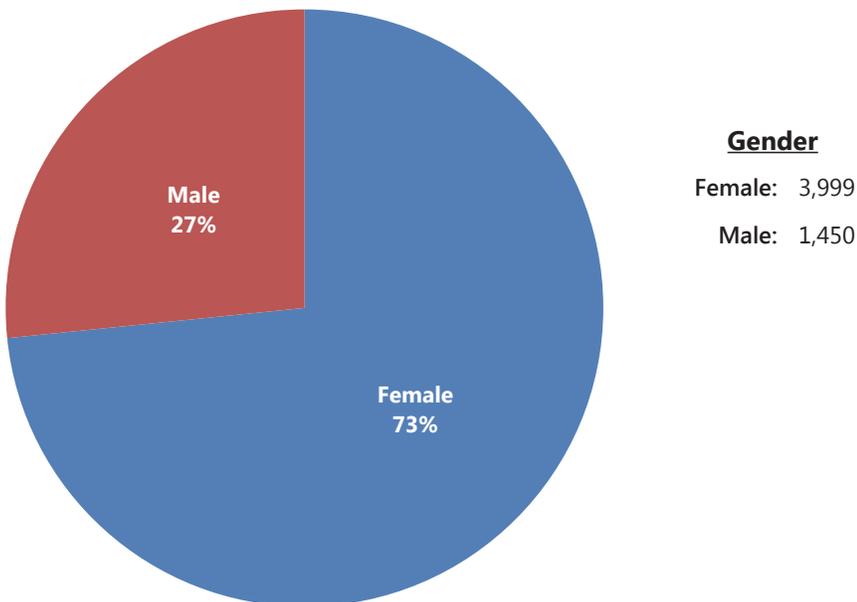
## Client Age

The average age of Hamilton County ESP clients in 2015 was 79. Eligibility for the program starts at age 60. Some services are also available to clients under age 60 who have dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. The chart below shows that nearly half of ESP clients are age 80 or older.



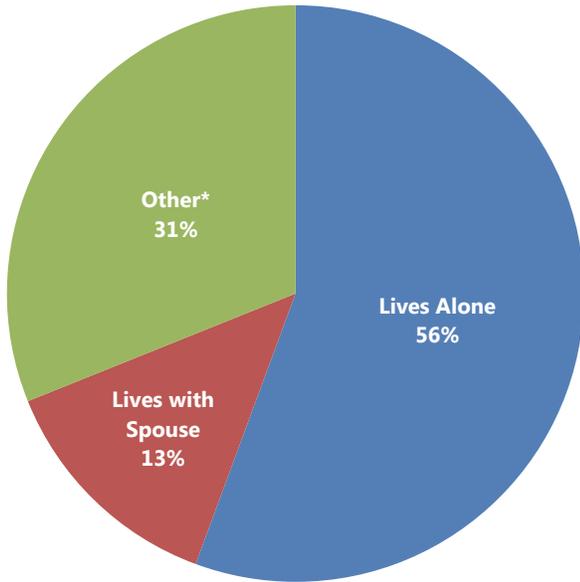
## Gender

Nearly three out of every four clients enrolled in the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program are women.



## Living Arrangements

ESP is intended to supplement care already provided by family and friends. Many clients, however, do not have anyone who helps them regularly other than through the program. **More than half of clients live alone.**



### Living Arrangements

Lives Alone: 3,031

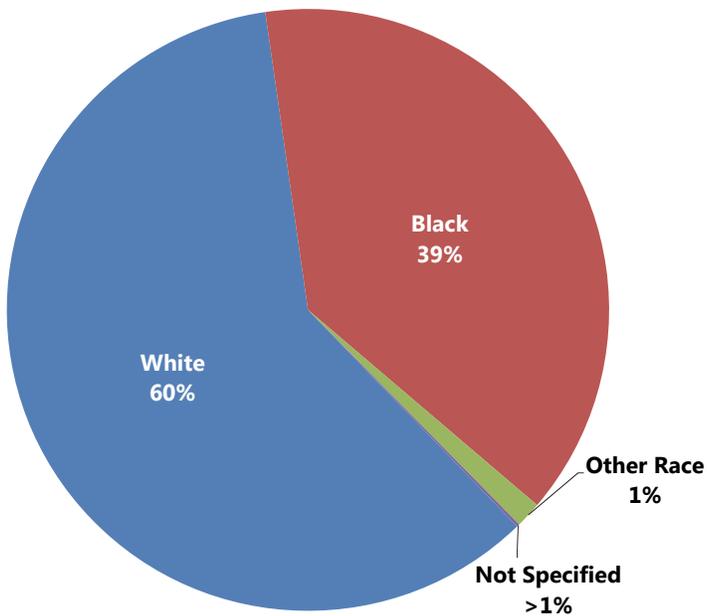
Other\*: 1,694

Lives with Spouse: 724

\*Other includes arrangements such as living with other family member, friend, caregiver, or unspecified.

## Race

Clients enrolled in the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program are racially diverse.



### Race

White: 3,267

Black: 2,098

Other Race: 76

Not Specified: 8

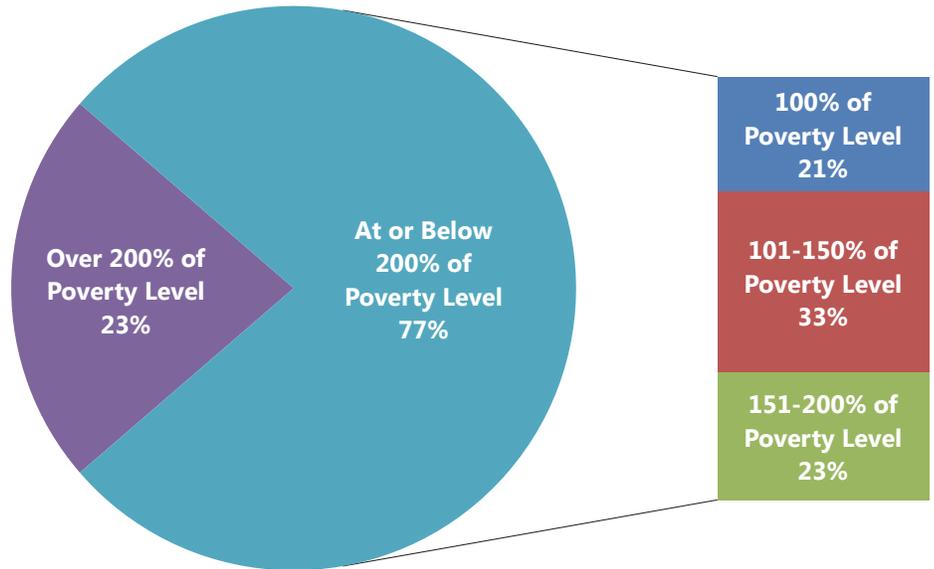
### Client Income and Expenses\*

As the adjacent chart demonstrates, most ESP clients have modest incomes. **More than three-quarters of ESP clients have annual incomes of \$23,540 or less** (200% of the 2015 Federal Poverty Guideline for one person which is \$11,770 or less). Based on a formula that takes income and health care expenses into account, some clients make a monthly co-payment for ESP services.

Clients' average monthly income: \$1,612

Clients' average monthly out-of-pocket medical costs: \$266

Clients with a co-payment: 30%

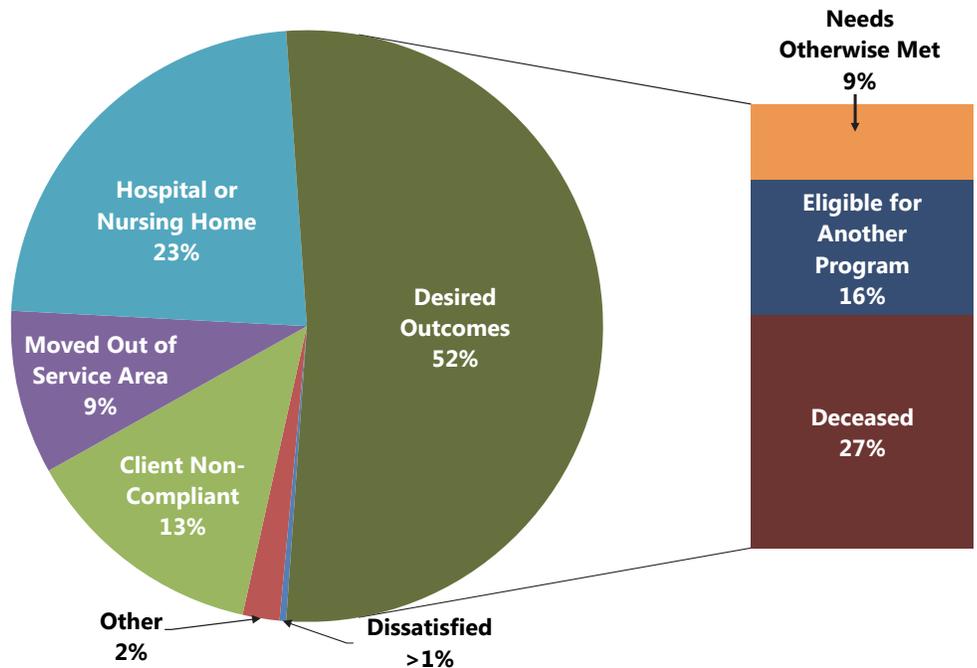


\*Client income and expenses data excludes 369 clients who receive only home-delivered meals and are therefore not required to provide income and expense information. Calculations for the data shown above and in the corresponding pie chart are based on 5,080 total clients served.

### Outcomes - Why Clients Leave the Program

We are proud of the fact that only a tiny fraction of ESP clients leave because they are dissatisfied with the program (less than 1%). The adjacent chart shows that more than half of clients leave the program because of "desirable outcomes." In 2015:

- 27% remained on the program, receiving care in their homes, until they died.
- 9% had their needs met in some other way: family or friends may have stepped in, their condition improved, or they entered hospice care.
- 16% became eligible for another program such as PASSPORT, the Assisted Living Waiver, or MyCare Ohio.



**Client Non-Compliant** examples include: client behavior unresolved, delinquent co-payment balance, refused/declined services, refused to provide financial information or to pay co-payment, unable to contact.

## The state of aging in Hamilton County

**It's a fact:** 70 percent of us will need some form of long-term care during our lifetimes. In general, three factors play a role in determining whether or not we will need care: age, disability, and income.

We are living longer, but the older we get, the more likely it is that we will have some form of disability or chronic illness that requires us to get help with everyday activities such as cooking, bathing, or going to the doctor. We also run the risk of out-living our financial resources, especially if we have to pay for care for an extended period of time.

Characteristics of People Age 65+ in COA Service Area				
County	Households with ≥1 person 65+	Total % of Population	With a Disability	Below 150% Poverty Level*
Butler	22.3%	11.5%	35.7%	15.4%
Clermont	22.1%	11.8%	36.1%	14.9%
Clinton	25.2%	13.5%	38.2%	≥15.1%^
<b>Hamilton</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>35.4%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>
Warren	20.9%	10.8%	32.4%	12%

**Source:** US Census. \*2015 Federal Poverty Level: \$11,770 for one person. 150% of Poverty Level = \$17,655. ^Clinton County poverty level is based on 0-125% of Federal Poverty Level.

As you have seen in this report, most of the seniors served by the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program are older, frail, and have modest incomes. Without ESP, many of our clients would be faced with a difficult decision: pay out-of-pocket for in-home care, or go straight to a nursing home. Either way, the likely outcome is Medicaid enrollment.

The chart above shows how Hamilton County compares to the surrounding counties in terms of age, disability, and poverty status. With so many seniors at risk for needing care, the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program offers a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care. It can prevent or delay the need for institutional care and helps keep people off Medicaid. **For seniors who can't afford to pay for private care, yet don't qualify for Medicaid, Hamilton County ESP is a lifeline.**

## Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Providers

*With valid contracts January 1 - December 31, 2015*

A Miracle Home Care  
 Active Day of Cincinnati  
 Advanced Medical Equipment, Inc.  
 AL-ADHAM Construction and Restoration  
 Algo Termite & Pest Control  
 All Gone Termite & Pest Control, Inc.  
 American Ramp Systems  
 Assisted Care by Black Stone  
 Bayley Adult Day  
 Bernens Medical  
 Cincinnati Area Senior Services, Inc.  
 Comfort Keepers #172  
 Custom Home Elevator & Lift Co. Inc.  
 Day Share Senior Services  
 Deupree Meals on Wheels  
 Emerson Heating & Cooling Company  
 Guardian Medical Monitoring, Inc.  
 Helping Hands Healthcare, Inc.  
 Hillebrand Home Health  
 Home First  
 Hyde Park Center for Older Adults

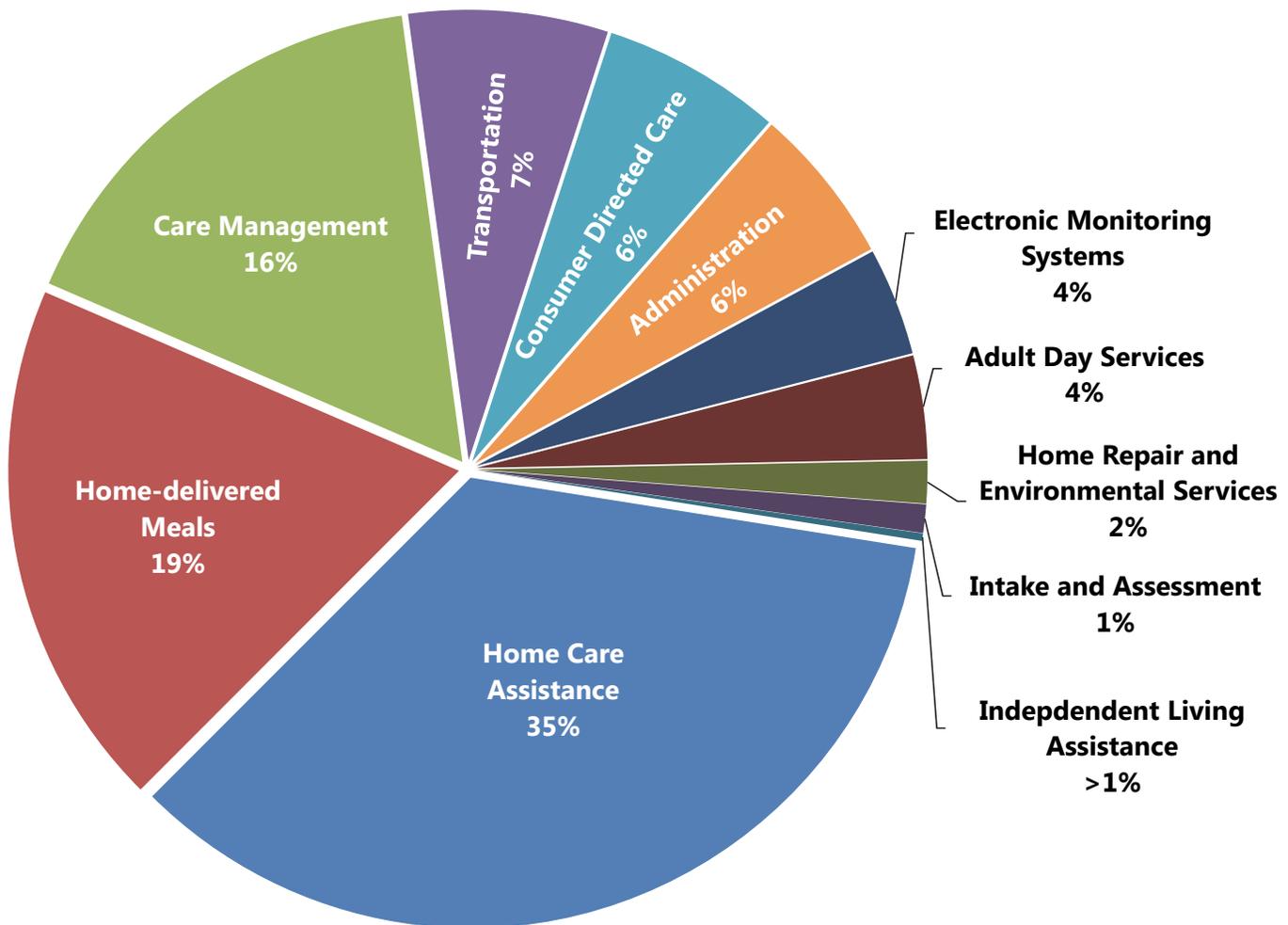
Interim HomeStyles of Greater Cincinnati, Inc.  
 Jewish Family Service  
 Mayerson JCC  
 Meda-Care Transportation, Inc.  
 MedAdapt Ltd.  
 Milt's Termite & Pest Control  
 Mullaney's Pharmacy & Home Health Care  
 North College Hill Senior Center  
 Nova Home Care Co.  
 Pennington Construction  
 Senior Deserved Day  
 Senior Independence  
 St. Joseph Construction  
 Superior Home Care, Inc.  
 Sycamore Senior Center  
 The Visiting Nurse Association  
 UTS  
 Wesley Community Services

## How your tax dollars are spent

Without the support of Hamilton County taxpayers, the Elderly Services Program would not exist. Local tax dollars cover 90 percent of the total cost of the program. As the Area Agency on Aging for southwestern Ohio, including Hamilton County, Council on Aging is able to leverage state and federal funding to cover approximately 6 percent of program expenses. Additional funding comes from client donations (requested, but not required, for home-delivered meals), and client co-payments (about 30 percent of clients qualify for a co-payment, based on their income and medical expenses).

The table on page 15 shows the number of clients who received each type of service, the number of service units they received (hours, trips, etc.), and the total cost for those units. The chart below shows that our three greatest expenses are for home care assistance (a service that combines personal care, homemaking, companion, and respite services), home-delivered meals, and care management. ESP is not a one-size-fits-all program. It is flexible in order to provide the right services, in the right amounts, at the right times.

Provider agencies (see list, page 13) deliver these services under contract with Council on Aging. COA handles contracting, program policy development, financial administration, information technology, quality improvement, communications, and data collection and analysis. As southwestern Ohio's Area Agency on Aging, COA is charged with identifying, planning, facilitating, and monitoring services to improve quality of life for older adults, including those living in Hamilton County.



Some services were consolidated in this chart for formatting purposes. Detailed expense information for each service can be found on page 15.

## EXPENSES

<u>Service<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>Clients Served</u>	<u>Service Units</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Care Management	5,449	N/A	\$2,966,206
Home Care Assistance	3,354	319,504 <i>hours</i>	\$6,345,359
Electronic Monitoring System	2,947	27,638 <i>months of rentals</i>	\$397,167
Home-delivered Meals	2,538	531,430 <i>meals</i>	\$3,445,530
Medical Transportation	1,142	41,346 <i>one-way trips</i>	\$1,216,395
Home Medical Equipment	1,041	1,467 <i>equipment rentals</i>	\$305,584
Consumer Directed Care	339	3,298 <i>months of service</i>	\$1,167,995
Minor Home Repairs	266	322 <i>repairs</i>	\$225,848
Independent Living Assistance <sup>2</sup>	215	2,173 <i>hours</i>	\$48,511
Non-Medical Transportation	175	2,676 <i>one-way trips</i>	\$80,235
Adult Day Service	164	10,473 <i>hours</i>	\$583,859
Adult Day Transportation	84	43,849 <i>miles</i>	\$89,587
Environmental Services <sup>3</sup>	46	152 <i>jobs</i>	\$50,345
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$185,140
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$1,026,464
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<b>\$18,134,225</b>

## REVENUE

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$1,146,574
Client Donation	\$24,398
Client Co-payment	\$567,672
Hamilton County Elderly Services Levy	\$16,395,581
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$18,134,225</b>

### Additional Expenses

To provide additional help to older adults in the county, including protection from fraud, scams, and abuse, Hamilton County Commissioners distributed Elderly Services levy funds to the following Hamilton County organizations:

- Hamilton County Job and Family Services - Adult Protective Services Unit: \$359,398
- Hamilton County Veterans Service Commission: \$205,000

<sup>1</sup> Services are listed in order of number of clients served

<sup>2</sup> Help with benefit applications and organizing personal and household records

<sup>3</sup> Pest control, major housekeeping, and waste removal



*“Jen has been there for us. She’s been very, very helpful. We really appreciate it.”*

David (not pictured) moved in with his mother, Mary, to be her caregiver. The family receives assistance from the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program and their COA Care Manager, Jen. Read the family’s story on page 6 of this report.



Hamilton County Commissioners  
138 East Court Street, Rm 603  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  
(513) 946-4400  
[www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov)



Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio  
175 Tri County Parkway  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246  
(513) 721-1025  
(800) 252-0155  
[www.help4seniors.org](http://www.help4seniors.org)

