



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

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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.