



2024

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Hamilton County
*Elderly Services
Program*



Welcome

As chair of the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program (ESP) Advisory Council, I am pleased to share our program's 2024 Annual Report. In 2024, ESP and the senior services tax levy that funds it, served 8,321 of our friends, neighbors and loved ones.

It continues to be a challenging time for ESP, but this advisory council is committed to our goal of serving as many people as possible with the funding available to us. In the face of rising demand for services, increasing costs and shrinking federal funding, we continue to work with ESP's administrator, Council on Aging (COA), to find innovative ways to meet this goal.

In 2024, as we continued to manage enrollment into ESP to focus on serving individuals most at risk for nursing home placement, we found several opportunities to offset or reduce costs to the levy, which ultimately helped us stretch tax dollars further to serve more people. For example, Hamilton County's \$2.5 million share of Ohio's Healthy Aging grants was administered by COA at no administrative cost, which helped offset costs for critical services delivered through ESP. While the Healthy Aging grant offered a one-time boost to our program that helped to meet the needs of more than 3,600 individuals, other initiatives are having a longer-term impact on our bottom line:

- A competitive bidding process for Electronic Monitoring Service allowed COA to leverage regional volume and lower costs. This process resulted in \$768,300 in savings for our program, bringing in a monthly service rate of \$19 – a rate 42% lower than the Medicaid rate.
- ESP's laundry delivery service is growing in popularity and 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 \$91,051 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 clients and providers, resulting in 7% savings for Hamilton County ESP.

Also in 2024, COA launched STEPS to Stability, a program designed to meet the emergent needs of older adults who can't access support through other available programs. Thanks to \$1 million in funding allocated to the program by Hamilton County commissioners, STEPS to Stability provided utility assistance and home modifications and repairs to more than 1,000 county residents.

All of this work 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 while federal funding returns to pre-pandemic levels.

Looking ahead, this advisory council will work with COA to begin easing some of the eligibility requirements put in place to manage the program's enrollment, and we will continue to identify and implement innovative solutions to help us meet the growing needs of our county's older adults.

On behalf of this advisory council and the thousands of older adults and families served by our program, thank you for your continued support of the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program.



Janice Hunter

Chair, Hamilton County
Elderly Services Program
Advisory Council

ESP is a Community Partnership

Hamilton County Commissioners

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

Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council

Janice Hunter, Chair; Dimity Orlet, Vice Chair; Angele Blackshear (Sister Keli);
Viola Brown; Randi Burlew; Janine Gage; Holly Mundon; Susan Van Amerongen

Administered by Council on Aging

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





2024

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.

8,321 Clients Served


68%
FEMALE


32%
MALE



59%
LIVE ALONE



\$293
MONTHLY
OUT-OF-POCKET
MEDICAL EXPENSES



77%
AGE 70+ (38 100+)



\$1,918
MEAN MONTHLY
INCOME



481
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/hcesp2024

513Relief Bus, COA receive national innovation award for work to connect residents with resources

2024 marked the second year of COA's partnership with Hamilton County's innovative 513Relief Bus. The partnership celebrated several highlights in 2024, including receipt of a national innovation award and collaboration to host a special Healthy Aging Day party for Hamilton County older adults and caregivers.



Healthy Aging grant serves more than 3,600 older adults

In 2023, Hamilton County commissioners received \$2.5 million from Ohio's Healthy Aging grant to help at-risk older adults remain in their homes and communities. COA worked with county leaders to develop a plan that would use the grant to address urgent, unmet needs, including home repairs and modifications, food assistance and help accessing benefits. COA successfully delivered the services supported by the grant, serving more than 3,600 older adults.



home52 Transportation recognized by National Aging and Disability Transportation Center

Michelle was a long-time user of public transportation – until health complications make it impossible for her to get to the bus stop. She got help from home52 Transportation, a specialized transportation service designed to meet the unique needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities. home52 Transportation was selected for inclusion in the 2023 National Aging and Disability Transportation Center's (NADTC) Innovations Showcase.



Innovative service prevents simple need from becoming a big barrier to independence

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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 more than \$760,000 in savings for Hamilton County ESP.



New program targets unmet needs of older adults

STEPS to Stability is a new program designed to address one-time and immediate needs of older adults who do not qualify for help through existing programs. In 2024, the STEPS to Stability program provided \$1 million in utility assistance and home repairs and safety modifications to more than 1,000 income-eligible older adults in Hamilton County, including Brenda, whose front windows were destroyed by a mulch fire. "I didn't know what I was going to do," Brenda said. "I did not think I would qualify, I had been told 'no' so many times."



Expenses + Revenue

How tax dollars are spent

ESP would not exist without the generous support of voters. A county tax levy in place since 1992 provides 85% of ESP's funding. The current 1.6-mill property tax levy was approved by 78% of voters in 2022 and was estimated at that time to cost \$33.97 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 8% of ESP expenses. Additional funding comes from voluntary client donations and client co-payments.

Revenue

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$2,598,392
Healthy Aging Grant	\$1,881,828
Client Donations and Co-payments	\$445,494
Hamilton County Elderly Services Levy	\$28,018,931
TOTAL REVENUE	\$32,944,646

Expenses

SERVICE	CLIENTS SERVED	SERVICE UNITS	COST
Care Management	6,123	58,457 months	\$4,876,509
Home-Delivered Meals ¹	4,082	795,375 meals	\$7,233,383
Electronic Monitoring Systems	3,171	27,860 months of rentals	\$588,709
Home Care Assistance	2,929	312,307 hours	\$8,163,784
FastTrack Home Care Transitions	1,809	7,785 months	\$1,412,674
Transportation	1,140	44,081 one-way trips	\$2,309,125
STEPS to Stability ^{1,2}	1,099	1,337 repairs and utility credits	\$862,429
Home Medical Equipment	912	1,618 items	\$260,843
Consumer-Directed Care ¹	651	164,360 hours	\$3,147,069
Minor Home Repairs	337	356 repairs	\$488,267
Laundry Service	239	4,240 jobs	\$243,181
Independent Living Assistance ³	143	2,686 hours	\$288,014
Adult Day Services	79	5,584 days	\$504,977
Adult Day Transportation	79	5,548 one-way trips	\$137,463
Environmental Services ⁴	42	117 jobs	\$77,796
Overnight Respite ⁵	34	222 nights	\$76,595
Medical Recovery and Extended Care Services	23	1,159 bed nights	\$250,000
Kinship Meals ⁵	9	1,815 meals	\$22,770
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$1,879,800
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$121,258
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$32,944,646

Additional Expenses

Hamilton County Commissioners distributed funds from the senior services levy to the following services and organizations: Care for Caregivers, \$170,447; Hamilton County Job and Family Services Adult Protective Unit, \$400,000; Hamilton County Veterans Service Commission, \$163,451.

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

² Funded in part by senior services tax levy. For 2024, 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 Service funded in whole or in part by Federal Older Americans Act, drawn down by Council on Aging

What is ESP?

The Elderly Services Program (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 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. 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

\$521

Monthly costs for
ESP services

VS

\$6,000+

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 2024:

78,165

requests for information and referral fulfilled

1,972

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

4,837

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

\$4.5 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.