

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY OFFICE FOR AGING SERVICES PUBLIC HEARING ABSTRACT FOR THE 2026 PROGRAM YEAR

INTRODUCTION: The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services (CCOFAS) was established by the county legislature in 1973. According to 2023 Census data(<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US36013-chautauqua-county-ny/>), the population of Chautauqua County is estimated at 124,891 individuals who reside here with 27,726 people or 29% of the population over the age of 60. This is well above the national average of the population over age 60 years. CCOFAS is responsible for planning, coordinating, funding, and advocating for programs and services which meet the needs of Chautauqua County residents aged 60 and over as well as providing information and assistance for individuals with disabilities and caregivers of any age. Services are targeted to individuals with the greatest social and/or economic need, placing emphasis on serving older adults who are low-income, minorities, and/or those with disabilities.

CCOFAS anticipates our overall budget for 2026 programs and services for older adults and caregivers will be \$5,844,728.00 and we plan to serve 6,500 people in 2026. The budget consists of approximately \$4,008,442.00 in Federal and State funds, \$1,013,686.00 in local Chautauqua County share dollars, and anticipated \$882,600.00 in participant contributions.

CCOFAS contracts over 3.7 million dollars to local businesses and not-for-profit organizations that assist in the provision of services to older adults. The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services is regulated by the New York State Office for the Aging and the Federal US Administration through the Older Americans Act. We also adhere to state and County Purchasing and Procurement rules in determining provider agencies. The purpose of our annual Public Hearing and this document is to present a draft plan for the upcoming year and to obtain input from the community before our final submission is sent to the New York State Office for the Aging. The Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services is mandated to provide a list of priority services that the local Area Agency on Aging will address in 2026.

CCOFAS Goals for 2026 include:

1. Further the vision of the Older Americans Act to cultivate innovative approaches reflective of local needs and preferences.
2. Create an age-friendly process to enable older New Yorkers to remain in their own homes with a high quality of life for as long as possible through the provision of home and community-based services, including support for family caregivers are available and accessible to those who most need them when they need them.
3. Ensure the rights of older New Yorkers and prevent their abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
4. Empower older New Yorkers to stay active and healthy through Older Americans Act services and those services offered under Medicare/Medicaid.
5. Successfully respond and adapt to future emergencies and disasters.
6. Promote equitable access to older adults in greatest social and economic need throughout all programs and services administered.
7. Support the continuation and growth of state and local policy, programs, and investments that complement and expand upon Older Americans Act programs.
8. Family caregivers will be recognized, assisted, included, supported, and engaged through a variety of programs so that they can care for their care receiver at home for as long as possible.
9. Assist caregivers to prepare an emergency plan to manage care needs if they are unable to care for their care receiver creating linkages to medical facility providers for immediate admissions.
10. Increase in county transportation options and service for older adults and caregivers.

Our priority services are as follows:

1. **In-Home/Community Services:** CCOFAS assesses older adults in need of in-home care and then provides case management to ensure the community services chosen continue to meet the needs of the older adults and their caregivers so they can stay as independent as possible as long as they reside in the community. Case managers also advocate for and coordinate community services options for their older adult clients. Services can include Housekeeping/Chore assistance, Personal Care, Social Adult Day Services, Respite Care(to give a break to the caregiver), Personal Emergency Response systems(PERS), and other services such as home modifications to individuals aged 60 and over who are not eligible to receive these benefits through Medicaid or VA. OFA subcontracts with Accredited Care, Aftercare, Caregivers, COI, Consumer Direct Choice, New Vision Services, and Willcare licensed homecare agencies to provide care aides in the home. OFAS also subcontracts with Connect America for PERS, Chautauqua Adult Day Service Inc., Tanglewood, Comfort Today, and Chautauqua Home and Rehab Inc. for home modification/access services. Everyone in the OFAS homecare programs receives Case Management services from our staff. Additional funding realized during the program year may be redirected to in-home care services since this service is in the highest demand and there are waiting lists for some types of care. People over 90 years of age and with certain diagnoses may be given priority on the waitlist.
2. **Nutrition and Wellness Services:** The OFAS nutrition program includes home-delivered meals, congregate meals, dietitian consultations, nutrition education, and evidence-based wellness programs. Overall, in 2026, OFAS expects to serve 4,050 people in the senior nutrition program and 150 people in our health and wellness programs.
 - i. Home-Delivered Meals: Home-delivered meals are specific to individuals who are over 60 years of age, frail and disabled; and have difficulty leaving their home or are unable to prepare meals for themselves (as determined by an assessment). The Nutrition and Wellness Coordinator and Registered Dietitian, Carey Skelton, provides monitoring and oversight as well as menu development. UPMC kitchen produces the home-delivered meals. Both Dunkirk-Fredonia Meals on Wheels and Jamestown Area Meals on Wheels provide meal delivery services. All these pieces are necessary to provide meals that meet the Older Americans Act nutrition standards.
 - ii. Waiting Lists: Federal funding levels for 2025/26 did not meet the current clients served but, with NY States Unmet needs funding for 2026, we anticipate clearing the current wait list for home delivered meals.
 - iii. Congregate Meals: Our congregate meal program is widely known as Dining Out. The program is available to anyone over 60 years of age. The suggested donation is \$5.00. Once registered for this program, older adults are assigned a CHQAging card that can be used at participating locations.
 - iv. Nutrition Education: Overseen by the Nutrition & Wellness Coordinator. Congregate Meal participants have access to monthly nutrition education with their CHQAging card. Printed materials are sent to home-delivered meals clients. A nutrition education series of classes are offered to groups throughout the county, both in-person or virtually. Additionally, nutrition staff contribute monthly articles to local newspapers.

- v. Nutrition Counseling: Registered Dietitians conduct a phone or Zoom meeting with individuals who have dietary concerns and require individualized nutrition counseling to improve or change their diet due to health concerns.
 - vi. Health Promotion programs: Our wellness educator will facilitate evidence-based programs throughout the county. Programs could include Wellness Initiative for Senior Education (W.I.S.E) and Diabetic Prevention Program (D.P.P) courses. These classes ensure that older adults have the tools for optimal wellness and reduce the need for more costly medical interventions.
3. **Caregiver Services**: The OFAS case worker provides education, training, and support to caregivers who are caring for an aging parent, spouse, or loved one. This program provides counseling, respite, and support groups to help caregivers cope with the stress of this important role, so they don't burn out. There is a specific initiative with the Alzheimer's Association of WNY to assist caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias. Late 2024 and into 2025 we were able to initiate an overnight in facility respite option for caregivers to place their loved ones for a week of 24 care and supervision.
 4. **Medicare Insurance Counseling Program**: Our Certified Medicare Counselors provide unbiased information on traditional Medicare, Supplemental plans, Part D stand-alone plans, and Medicare Advantage plans to help you make the choice that fits your needs and lifestyle. Our counselors can also advise you on NYS EPIC and the Medicare Savings which can save you on drug costs and Part B premiums if you qualify. Medicare Counseling is available year-round to help people enrolling in Medicare for the first time, to help change insurance during open enrollment, and anytime you are having difficulty with your Medicare coverage.
 5. **NY Connects Information and Assistance**: We have trained Information and assistance specialists who answer the NY Connects Helpline or take appointments or walk in visits to answer your questions on all community-based programs available in Chautauqua County. NY Connects will screen and guide you to the service option that meets your situation. NY Connects also acts as the central intake for Home delivered meals, OFAS and OFAS Non-medical Homecare, Chautauqua County Medical Monitoring, and many other programs so you only have to call one number to get services started. Last year NY Connects in Chautauqua County took 7,386 calls and we plan to take 7,500 calls in 2025
 6. **Legal Assistance**: As a required component under the Older Americans Act, OFAS provides legal assistance through our subcontracted provider to individuals aged 60 and over. Legal issues can include issues such as landlord/tenant issues, housing, utilities, guardianship, foreclosure, abuse, neglect, and age discrimination. Legal assistance is targeted towards older individuals in social and economic need.
 7. **Transportation**: CHQ Transit contracts with OFAS to provide in-county transportation to medical appointments for people age 60+ (who are not eligible for the same service under Medicaid). CHQ Transit also manages a volunteer program to provide out-of-county transportation to medical appointments within a 75-mile radius. Due to funding limitations, transportation with OFAS funding is only provided for medical appointments however CHQ Transit offers special discounts for seniors who ride their regular route buses and has special runs for grocery & other shopping. In 2026, we are working with our advisory council to explore a purchase of

vehicles and staff for coordination of in county transportation for areas that cannot be served by the current public transportation services.

8. **Home repairs/modifications:** Home modification programs are needed to ensure older adults and people with disabilities can age in place successfully. However, older adults have difficulty navigating through the maze of programs. Assisting older adults and caregivers to connect to existing programs allow people to maintain or modify their homes to keep them safe, accessible, energy efficient, and ensure that they can age in their homes and avoid unnecessary institutionalization. Older adults have a range of needs when it comes to home modifications-from contributing to aging in place, preventing falls, to supporting needs after a hospital stay.
9. **Senior Employment & Training:** Through the partnership with Goodwill- and Senior Services America, grant funds from the Department of Labor, are used for older adults age 55+ who meet income guidelines. The participants are placed in government or not-for-profit agencies where they work a 20-hour work week for minimum wage while gaining valuable work experience and on-the-job training. Many of these work experiences turn into full or part-time regular employment.

Funding and Contributions for Programs: Programs are funded through the US Administration on Aging, New York State Office for the Aging, Chautauqua County, and contributions from clients.

No eligible person can be turned away for inability or refusal to contribute to a program or service, except for programs requiring a cost share, and when funds are exhausted. Individuals should consider their circumstances before making a program contribution. All contributions are put back into programming to provide additional services to older adults in need. Individuals may contribute anonymously through contributions by check or money order. Contributions will not be tracked. Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services remains strong in its commitment to assisting individuals to remain in their homes and community for as long as they choose and can safely do so with support. The priority services that are listed above are many of the programs we have in place to achieve this goal.

CCOFAS appreciates any feedback related to this plan. We will take comments through October 15, 2025, for the 2026 Program Plan, however, we are interested in hearing about older adult needs throughout the year, you may contact the Chautauqua County Office for the Aging via mail: 7 North Erie Street, Mayville NY 14757; via phone: (716) 753-4471 or via email: CCNYC@chqgov.com.

On behalf of the staff of the Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services, and our community provider agencies, we thank you for any feedback you can provide to help us in helping our community's older adults to "Aging Well At home."