



**Andrew J. Spano, Westchester County Executive
Westchester County Board of Legislators**

2009

BUDGET

PRESENTATION

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
Mae Carpenter, Commissioner**

WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES **PROPOSED BUDGET**

The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services is the New York State designated Area Agency on Aging for the federal Administration on Aging. The Department is responsible for assessing and prioritizing the needs of the elderly within Westchester County; creating comprehensive and coordinated plans for meeting those needs; advocating for responsive policies, programs, actions, legislation and resources on behalf of the elderly; and for administering programs under the federal Older Americans Act, the New York State Community Service for the Elderly Act and other federal and state funds. Federal and state funds are allocated to Westchester County on a per capita basis set aside specifically for Westchester County's population age 60 and over.

Demographics

- 187,000 persons over 60 years of age constitute 20% of Westchester's population.
- Those over the age of 85 is the fastest growing segment of our population with a 24% jump between the last two decades
- Women comprise 56% of the 65 to 74 years olds; 62% of the 75 to 84; and 71% of the over 85 age group
- While the county's white senior population declined by 2% from 1990 to 2000, the black population grew by 11.6%, the Asian seniors grew from 3.5% to 5.5% of the county's population; and 4% of the Hispanic population is over 65 year of age.
- Senior citizens living alone account for 29% of Westchester's one-person households. Homeowners outnumber renters 54.7% to 45.3%
- The population 65 and older with a disability affecting their mobility or ability to work or care for themselves rose from 33,363 or 26.5% of the senior population to 41,097 (31.9%)
- Over 37,000 senior households had less than the income needed to afford the median rent.
- 36% of the senior population had incomes of less that \$25,000 per year and 57% had incomes of less than \$45,000. Those incomes have since eroded with the loss of investment returns.

Mission

The mission of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services is to preserve the independence and dignity of the County's elderly population by providing services and programs to maintain physical, mental, social, health and wellness needed to prevent unnecessary and premature dependence and institutionalization thereby allowing older persons to remain in their own homes and continue active participation in community life for as long as possible. Community-based services support cost containment and are cost-avoidance for tax payers. The Department's mission also includes providing assistance to family caregivers who provide 80% of the care for the frail elderly to enable them to remain at home and thereby avoiding the costs to taxpayers for more expensive Medicaid funded services such as round the clock in-home services or nursing home placement.

Statistics from the AARP Public Policy Institute show that the value of unpaid care giving is \$350 billion exceeding the \$342 billion for Medicare and \$300 billion for the Medicaid Programs in 2005. In fact it is greater than " the total sales of the world's largest companies, including Wal-Mart (\$349 billion in 2006) and Exxon Mobil (\$335 billion). Where would the taxpayers and economy be without the 80% of the care provided by family and friends who are asking for just a little more assistance to continue their humanitarian acts of caring.

DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES:

NEW MULTI-YEAR FOCUS

To create the Westchester's Livable Community Project designed to link residents together in village-like communities and organizations for the purposes of increasing awareness and knowledge on critical issues that impact the quality of life for all residents, particularly the elderly, and increasing civic engagement to bring about needed changes and/or services. And most importantly, for residents living in close proximity or spending time together in organizations to know how they may be able to help preserve the independence and dignity of their neighbors and friends as they age in place.

There are many facets or features of Livable Communities that together insure that residents are not falling through the cracks of a torn societal fabric. Those features are: accessibility to needed locations and services; advocacy for community needs and needed changes; arts for cultural stimulation; care giving assistance; consumer protection; cultural diversity; design and use of public spaces; disaster preparedness; education for life long learning and skills training; employment for all ages; environment protection; estate planning to provide for long term care financing ; formal and informal support services; health and wellness; housing, home design and home repair options; legal services; leisure and enrichment activities; long term care services both community-based and in nursing homes; money management; parks and recreation; planning and zoning for land use; retirement planning; safety and security; transportation options; and, volunteerism.

For most elderly people, being able to remain in their home, in their community, to "age in place," is usually the desired choice. Yet our society has had a tendency to institutionalize the elderly once signs of being unable to manage independently begin to show, thus creating a fear in most elderly people that if they let it be known that they are having difficulty, they will have to move from their home.

Sometimes things like yard care, roof repairs, torn/frayed carpeting, plumbing repairs, lack of handrails/grab bars, electrical problems, lighting and the like, are more than these folks can handle, both physically and financially.

Yet research shows that strengthening the ties between the elderly and their community and creating programs in which a community watches out for its oldest residents helps to keep older adults healthy, safe, and better able to live out their lives in their home.

With the growing number of elderly in our communities comes an equally significant need, among the elderly who reside in their own homes, to have support from their community, and from their neighbors. By creating social networks within our communities we can help older adults lead happy and healthy lives in their own residences.

Often a little help with simple daily tasks, such as offering a ride to the grocery store, or visiting a lonely senior, can mean the difference between an older person remaining in the community or having to move from their long-time home."

Many communities are beginning to develop neighborhood programs to help seniors stay in their homes.

Westchester County's Livable Community Project is a citizen engagement and empowerment program to encourage residents to become involved in the planning process. It begins first with becoming informed about the issues such as: affordable, accessible and appropriate transportation and housing options; physical and social environments that support a varied lifestyle as one ages in place and health and wellness opportunities; plans for smart community development such as traffic patterns with older drivers in mind, sidewalks placed for easy access to services and built for ease in mobility support products (wheelchairs, scooters); safe, central areas for planned and unplanned inter-generational interaction.

ON-GOING

Community-Based Services

To continue to provide vital services to older persons most at risk of losing their independence in order that they may remain in their homes and in the community safely and prevent premature institutionalization. The Department and its subcontractors are averaging over 1.5 million separate contacts with older persons providing information,

assistance, counseling, case management, housing assistance and meals; trips to doctors, grocery shopping, cultural, educational, entertainment, health and wellness, recreation and other quality of life events and activities; visits to residents in nursing homes and adult homes as linkages to the community and to prevent and detect elder abuse. Additionally close to 150,000 hours of home care, respite and adult day services are provided. These services are merely a pinpoint in comparison with the future needs of our aging community and more federal and state assistance will be needed to help counties provide quality community based services that prevent costly Medicaid services.

Access Services

- Provide information on services and benefits, referral, case assistance, case management and transportation to seniors with particular attention to those with the greatest social and economic needs.
- Seek out, identify and inform seniors about existing services and benefits in the most cost-effective manner and delay the need for more costly services by increasing the Department's outreach capacity.

Support Services

- Provide support services to the elderly, especially those with greatest needs, so that they may be served in the setting most appropriate to their needs and participate fully in family and community life.

In-Home Services

- Provide in-home services to older persons with functional impairments who need help with the ordinary activities of daily living.

Housing Services

- Help older persons remain in the community, preferably in their own homes, by providing comprehensive housing assistance services, including housing locator, referrals, shared housing and reverse mortgage counseling.

Food and Nutrition Services

- Promote health and prevent nutrition-related illness and premature deterioration through the provision of nutritionally balanced meals, nutrition education and nutrition counseling.

Employment Services

- Promote employment and training opportunities for older workers who need to earn additional income, upgrade their skills or engage in meaningful work activities.

Administration/Operations

- Raise funds for additional services to the County's elderly population by developing a long-term partnership of public, private and voluntary community organizations.
- Promote awareness of senior issues and advocacy efforts by community groups and to encourage coordination and mutual support among service providers.
- Develop and enhance providers' skills and abilities to deliver quality services to senior citizens by coordinating education programs for service providers to the elderly.

Family Caregiver Support Program and Elder Abuse Program

- Provide outreach to locate family caregivers and provide information on services and assist them in accessing services. Also provide support groups, training and respite to caregivers.
- To provide needed assistance to caregivers of older persons to reduce the impact of care giving that can lead to loss of income, stress and possible elder abuse. 35% of employees within a one year period will experience eldercare responsibilities. Two-thirds of family caregivers report conflicts between care giving and employment resulting in reduction in income.

Older Driver Safety Program

Twenty-two thousand (22,000) older drivers in Westchester County suffer from some form of dementia and approximately half of them are still driving.

This program works with law enforcement to help police officers better understand the needs of older drivers and how to meet them. Older drivers have the greatest set of risk factors for motor vehicle crashes. They suffer a much higher rate of motor vehicle fatalities when compared with other adult drivers. Statistics show that crash rates begin to rise at the age of 70 and continue to rise as age increases.

Counseling is provided to older drivers and family members to encourage them to utilize safety assessment, retraining and voluntary retesting services before tragedies occur.

Increasing Safety in the Home / Fall Prevention screening and Education

Older adults at greatest risk of falling are frail, have chronic conditions and are over the age of 80. These older adults often have the following characteristics: poor eyesight or hearing balance problems, moving difficulties or numbness in the limbs, use of certain medications, depression or stress. The Department conducts fall prevention screening/education program in the homes of the homebound elderly.

Elder Abuse Prevention

The Department opened three Safe Center for Seniors. This new one stop support center approach offers a wide range of services to at risk elderly including access to the only emergency elder abuse shelter of its kind in the nation. The center is designed to prevent elder abuse by offering assistance to prevent a series of problems from deteriorating into even bigger ones. Consultations with social workers, in-home services, caregiver support, legal and protective services, health screenings, fall prevention assessments and referrals are also offered. The partners in the centers are the Department of Senior Programs and Services, ElderServe and the Hebrew Home for the Aged, the Pace Women's Justice Center, and the Westchester Public Private Partnership for Aging Services. .

Service Indicators

	2007 Actual	2008 Estimated	2009 Planned
Number of Service Units:			
Direct Services Client Contacts	205231	205300	205300
Nutrition Counseling Client Hours	306	325	325
Transportation One Way Trips	149495	150000	150000
Public Education Client Contacts	125,000	125,000	125,000
Housing Client Contacts	2312	2325	2325
Victims Assistance Client Contacts	629	650	650
Respite Hours	32558	32600	32600
Long Term Care Ombudsman Hours	81403	81450	81450
Legal Services Hours	9191	9200	9200
Congregate Meals Served	216389	216400	216400
Home Delivered Meals Served	310757	310800	310800
In-Home Services Client Hours	124546	124600	124600
Adult Day Care Client Hours	26245	26300	26300

The 2009 projected service indicators were not increased over 2008 since increased funding has to be used for higher costs and anticipated cuts in state funding for '09

Fiscal Changes from 2008 to 2009

The Department of Senior Programs and Services administers funds from twenty different funding sources for a total of \$15,686,575 excluding the Net-Annual Regular, Data Processing and Inter Department Billings. This represents an increase of \$866,373 over the 2008 total of \$14,820,202. The County's matching share is 24.5% down from 27.5%. The County's matching share and contractual services decreased from \$4,083,805 to \$3,849,114 for a cut of \$234,691 from 2008 to 2009. This reduction does not represent a cut in services since it was offset by increased other funding.

