



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

**2010**

**BUDGET**

**PRESENTATION**

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

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

## **BACKGROUND**

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 Older Americans Act of 1965 was enacted by the U.S. Congress to provide assistance in the development of new or improved programs to help older persons secure equal opportunity to vital necessities in order that they may live independently with dignity. The Act established the Administration on Aging as the focal point at the federal level to oversee the development of a national network of comprehensive coordinated service opportunities for older persons.

The Administration on Aging provides Older Americans Act funds to State Units on Aging. The State Unit on Aging is an agency of state government designated by the governor to be the focal point in the state for issues and matters pertaining to older persons. State Units allocate federal and state funds to local Area Agencies on Aging which in New York State are primarily county-based and county operated, and provide leadership to state agencies and other statewide organizations to create and support services and opportunities for older persons.

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is the focal point within the areas of the state designated as planning and service areas (PSAs). The national network of area agencies on aging was established in 1974. This agency is responsible for advocating, planning, coordinating, and funding services and opportunities for older persons. There are 667 Area Agencies on Aging nationwide.

The New York State Office for the Aging and the Local Network of 59 Area Agencies on Aging/County Offices for the Aging were established under the Older Americans Act of 1965, as Amended. The Older Americans Act is the nation's largest single source of social supportive services aimed at the elderly, outside of programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services 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**

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- 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.

## **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..

The Department will institute the Livable Communities Caregiving Coaching Program in 2010. The goal of the Livable Communities Caregivers Coaching Program (L3C) is to develop a corps of volunteers who provide support and information to individual family caregivers and help them understand the options available to them. Coaches are in essence informed *Good Neighbors* trained by professionals such as nurses, social workers and geriatric care managers, who are also volunteers. These experts provide basic information about aging, common caregiving issues and resources available to caregivers. Coaches are stabilizing forces and sounding boards. Their training gives them the practical information to educate caregivers and then empower them to set priorities and make more informed decisions to meet the many challenges and responsibilities they face. Caregiver Coaches save taxpayer money by avoiding or delaying the need to move a senior to an assisted living facility or nursing home. The curriculum and its companion publication the L3C Curriculum and Resource guide for the program are the textbooks used for the training and were developed through the combined efforts of the Department of Seniors Programs and Services and Fordham University's Ravazzin on Aging. Fordham University is also the research institution evaluating the program

The Department will also increase technology training for seniors in 2010 for home and health safety, social networking and lifelong learning.

## **2010 DEPARTMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET (Pages 267-268)**

### **Positions**

The size of the staff is being reduced by 4 fte's. Westchester County has always had one of the lowest staff ratios to the number of elderly served in the state due to our network partnership project management approach. Qualified professional staff is leveraged to form strategic partnerships with other agencies who may or may not be subcontractors but have a shared interest.

### **Revenues to the County from Grants**

The Department receives funds from 20 grants for a total of 13,244,450 including the non-county tax levy

### **Service Indicators**

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The 2010 projected service indicators are basically the same as 2009 but higher than in 2008 although there were budget cuts in 2009 and projected for 2010.

**Fiscal Changes from 2009 to 2010**

The County's matching share was 20.62% in 2009 and approximately the same for 2010 down from 24.51% in 2008. The budget reflects a slight increase of 48,068. However non-mandated subcontracted services will be cut since the 2010 budget does not cover the accumulative federal budget cuts that were covered in the past from one time savings.