



Greene County Department of Human Services Annual Report 2024

I. INTRODUCTION

Greene County Department of Human Services provides programming for seniors, veterans and youth. Greene County provides services to the senior population thorough the AAA (Area on Aging), Veterans services are managed by the Veterans Service Agency and DWYER Peer Project Program, while the Youth Bureau provides support to children through a pre-PINS diversion program and the distribution of grant funding from OCFS for youth programs across the county.

II. SERVICES PROVIDED

a. Department of Aging

- i. Wellness In Nutrition Program (WIN)
 - 1. Nutrition Education
 - 2. Congregate Meals
 - 3. Home Delivered Meals
 - 4. Evidence Based Programming at the 5 Senior Center Locations
- ii. AAA Transportation
 - 1. Shopping Bus
 - 2. Medical Transportation
- iii. Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)
- iv. Community Services for the Elderly Program
 - 1. Caregiver Support
 - 2. Legal Services
- v. Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP)

b. Veterans

- i. Benefits Claims Assistance: VA Disability Compensation, Survivor Benefits, and Appeals

- ii. Benefits Counseling: VA Healthcare Enrollment Assistance, Education Benefits, and other benefits associated with state and local veteran's programs
- iii. Advocacy & Outreach
- iv. Medical Transportation to VA Healthcare Facilities
- v. Fresh Connect Program: Farmers Market Checks provided to veterans to use to purchase fresh, locally grown produce in an effort to help promote healthy living.

c. Youth Bureau

- i. Pre-PINS Diversion Program for at risk youth
- ii. Youth Program Pass-thru Funding from NYS Office of Children and Family Services
 - 1. Youth Development Funding
 - 2. Youth Team Sports Allocation
 - 3. Youth Sport Education Funding Infrastructure
 - 4. Youth Sports Education and Opportunity Funding

III. 2024 RECAP

Greene County Department of Human Services experienced significant challenges in 2024. Rising costs and inflation played a significant role in managing costs associated with our nutrition program and increased costs for contracted agencies. Additionally, higher demand for in-home services and lack of providers to support the need for services significantly impacted many seniors in need.

GCDHS had provided noticeable increase in services in 2024 compared to 2023, in areas such as case management services, congregate meals, transportation requests, home energy assistance requests, and information and assistance needs. While we did see a reduction in service units for home delivered meals and home services it was likely due to the lack of available routes for the home delivered meals and lack of adequate providers for the in-home services.

One service the department continues to rely upon is our volunteer transportation program, also known as the RSVP Volunteer Program. GCDHS relied on 207 Volunteers in 2024 to service 88,761 meals to 443 recipients and 1,268 rides to medical appointments for 126 clients. The value of these services equates to over 12,700 hours. To replace those volunteers with paid staff would

surpass \$474,000 in additional expenses. Without our volunteers we would be unable to provide many of great services we provide to our local communities and seniors.

Greene County Department of Human Services had undergone significant restructuring in late 2024. In addition to hiring a new Executive Director, the Veterans Service Agency and Vet2Vet program have now both been organized to report to the Executive Director and fall under the umbrella of Human Services. While many factors played into the reason for this change, of utmost importance was to better serve our communities across the county. The Department of Human Services has many services and programs that can supplement the lives of veterans and their families. Our goal was to streamline access and provide more services and support to those who have served our great nation.

IV. DEPARTMENT RESTRUCTURING

In addition to structural changes to the organizational management of the department, we also began a revamping of all our facilities towards the end of 2024 and early into 2025 including small improvements in the Veteran's Service Agency, digitizing and cleanup of old records and renovations to the main office. Cluttered areas and surplus office furniture have been removed and/or organized not only in the main office, but our nutrition sites as well. Our goal remains to improve our appearance to our clients and the public at large.

GCDHS has quickly begun to expand programming and outreach to the by offering more presentations and events at our senior centers. We have partnered with Greene County Public Health to provide health and emergency preparedness classes in addition to soliciting feedback from our seniors and senior clubs on programming they would like to see more of at the centers. We have continued to enhance our monthly newsletter by providing more information about upcoming events, senior club activities, and have added designated sections for Veteran Services, Vet2Vet activities and family nights, as well as Youth Bureau activities.

Looking back on goals we set in 2023, we are continuing to move away from pandemic era contingencies and start to get back to normal activities. We have increased staffing beginning late in 2024 and continuing in 2025. In addition, the

Executive Director has addressed such issues as lack of operating procedures that are relevant and up to date, creating plans for continuity of services during times of unexpected closures due to occurrences such inclement weather and building-related issues. This includes creating a per-diem pool that we can reach out to during times when we are low on staffing levels.

V. 2025 GOALS:

In 2024 we were unable to expand programming and services for aging or youth bureau due to significant changes in staffing (which includes multiple directors) throughout the year. However, it continues to be a goal for 2025. Additionally, the agency is looking forward to addressing the areas of deficiency that were identified in 2024 by creating an action plan to address those issues going into 2025. Some of these areas include lack of up-to-date standard operating procedures, clutter in the workplace and in our off-site centers, necessary updates to equipment and buildings that house our nutrition programs, implementing a universal fleet management program, records retention concerns (digitalization of records) and expansion of services via contracted agencies.

Additional goals for 2025 will also include updating our social media and websites. This includes ensuring more up-to-date and current information, including a calendar of events for the department activities.

We will be partnering with an agency who will assist us with financial records preparation to ensure that we are maximizing all our state dollars for best use and across the county.

We will be looking to make changes to the nutrition centers and nutrition programming. These changes will include replacing outdated equipment that maxed out its lifecycle, increasing activities offered at all centers, which will include bingo, arts/crafts, health and wellness activities. Additional changes to the nutrition site menus to include food allergen information, to help seniors know which meals contain items such as shellfish, gluten, etc.

In 2024 we've also identified areas where we can improve communication with outside agencies to best support our clients and will continue to build better

relationships and open additional lines of communication between internal county agencies and external agencies. One major part of this new initiative will be the creation of a new interagency referral system. This will be a centralized system for those agencies that we work with routinely to ensure more rapid access to our case management services.

Additionally in 2025, we will continue to identify creative ways to provide additional in-home services to seniors who are most in need of support to stay in their home. We also are looking to expand legal service options for our seniors and our veterans. Estate planning, wills and trusts are underutilized and could significantly help seniors and those with disabilities ensure they are able to plan for times when they may be incapacitated.