

# Services Provided by the Otsego County Office for the Aging

The Otsego County Office for the Aging plays a vital role in the community by striving to enhance the independence and overall well-being of its older adult residents. The office is dedicated to assisting individuals aged 60 and over, along with their caregivers, by offering a range of services and support designed to promote a safe and independent lifestyle within the community.

## Key Service Areas

### Dining and Nutrition Services

The Otsego County Office for the Aging recognizes the importance of proper nutrition for the health and well-being of seniors and offers a variety of dining and nutrition services. For seniors who enjoy communal dining, the office facilitates congregate meal opportunities at various locations throughout the county. These congregate dining centers provide balanced, nutritious meals in a social setting, offering not only sustenance but also valuable opportunities for interaction and engagement with peers. Several locations, such as the Cherry Valley Community Center, Nader Towers in Oneonta, and the Richfield Springs Community Center, host lunch services on specific days and times. These sites offer a convenient way for eligible residents, aged 60 and older, to access healthy meals for a suggested contribution. Furthermore, the office operates a Restaurant Dining Program, allowing seniors to utilize vouchers at participating local restaurants. This program provides an alternative to traditional dining centers, offering a more flexible and varied dining experience while still ensuring a nutritious meal.

For older adults who may have difficulty leaving their homes, the Otsego County Office for the Aging provides a home-delivered meals program. This service ensures that homebound seniors receive nutritious meals delivered directly to their residences, supporting their dietary needs and promoting their ability to remain independent. This program can be particularly beneficial for those with chronic conditions or those recovering from a hospital stay, with both short-term and long-term options available. Beyond providing meals, the office also recognizes the importance of education and guidance on healthy eating habits. Their "Health & Wellness" program encompasses services aimed at promoting the overall health of older adults, which includes nutritional well-being. Additionally, the office offers "Nutrition Counseling" services provided by a registered dietitian, who can offer personalized assessments and plans tailored to individual needs.

To provide a quick reference for congregate dining options, the following table outlines the locations and schedules based on available information:

Dining Location	Phone Number	Dining Days	Dining Times
Cherry Valley Community Center	607-547-6454	Monday/Wednesday	Noon
Nader Towers (Oneonta)	607-547-6454	Monday - Friday	11:30 am
Richfield Springs Community Center	607-547-6454	Tuesday/Thursday	11:30 am

### Transportation Services

Access to transportation is crucial for older adults to maintain their independence and engage with the community. The Otsego County Office for the Aging offers transportation services to help seniors access essential appointments and run errands. A key component of this is non-emergency medical transportation, which is available to transport seniors to and from pre-scheduled medical appointments. This service also extends to prescription pick-up, ensuring that seniors can obtain necessary medications. Individuals interested in utilizing this service can call the Office for the Aging at **607-547-4232** to inquire about availability.

Beyond medical appointments, the transportation services also include assistance with grocery shopping, typically offered once per month to the nearest grocery store, depending on scheduling and driver availability. This service helps seniors who may have difficulty with mobility or lack alternative transportation options to obtain essential groceries. The transportation program operates on a first-come, first-served basis, Monday through Friday, between 9 am and 4 pm, and it is recommended that transportation be requested with as much advance notice as possible. While there is no charge for this service, a suggested contribution of \$5 per trip is appreciated and helps support the continuation of the program. It is important to note that no one will be denied service due to an inability or unwillingness to contribute. For individuals with higher monthly incomes a contribution equal to the cost of the service may be encouraged. To be eligible for transportation services, individuals generally need to be aged 60 or older, residents of Otsego County, and have no other available transportation options. They should also be able to independently enter and exit the vehicle.

### In-Home Services

To support older adults who wish to remain in their own homes, the Otsego County Office for the Aging offers a variety of in-home services. These services are designed to help seniors maintain their independence and safety within a familiar environment. The specific types of in-home care assistance available include personal care, which involves help with tasks like bathing, dressing, and grooming. Home health aides can provide more comprehensive support, including personal care, light housekeeping, meal preparation, and medication reminders. Homemaker services focus on household tasks such as cleaning, laundry, and shopping, contributing to a safe and healthy living environment. Respite care is also offered as an in-home service, providing temporary relief for family caregivers.

A key program within the in-home services is the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP). EISEP aims to assist older adults who want to remain at home but require help with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) like dressing and bathing, as well as Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) such as shopping and meal preparation. The program provides non-medical in-home services, case management, and other supportive services to improve access to cost-effective care for those not eligible for Medicaid for similar services. Eligibility for EISEP includes being aged 60 or older, a resident of Otsego County, functionally impaired in at least one ADL or two IADLs, ineligible for similar Medicaid services, and able to remain safely at home. The cost of EISEP services is determined using a sliding fee scale based on income, with no cost for individuals with lower incomes.

The office also facilitates access to Medicaid Personal Care Services for eligible individuals who have a medical need for help with daily activities. These services can include assistance with meal preparation, housekeeping, and shopping. Information and fact sheets regarding Medicaid Personal Care Services and the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) are available through the office. To further enhance the safety and independence of seniors at home, the Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) is offered. PERS units allow individuals to quickly contact emergency help by pressing a button, providing reassurance for those who live alone or are at risk of falls. Fact sheets and a provider list for PERS are available.

### **Healthcare, Insurance, and Benefits Assistance**

Navigating the complexities of healthcare, insurance, and benefits can be challenging for older adults. The Otsego County Office for the Aging provides comprehensive assistance in these areas through various programs. Their Health Insurance Counseling program offers guidance and support to help seniors understand their health insurance options. A significant part of this involves assistance with Medicare enrollment and understanding the different parts of Medicare. The office provides numerous resources, including general question and answer documents, quick guides, and explanations of Medicare Parts C and D, Medigap policies, and the interaction between Medicare and Medicaid. Certified counselors are available to offer accurate, objective information and assistance with Medicare, private health insurance, and related health coverage plans.

The office also administers the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), which helps eligible households with the cost of heating their homes. HEAP can provide a regular benefit per program year and may also offer emergency benefits for those at risk of running out of fuel or having their service shut off. This program is crucial in ensuring that seniors can afford to heat their homes during colder months, protecting their health and well-being. Beyond these key programs, the Otsego County Office for the Aging can provide support and application assistance for a variety of other benefit programs. This includes programs such as Public Assistance, Medicaid, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Housing assistance, and HUD programs. The office serves as a central point of contact to help seniors navigate the application processes for these various programs, ensuring they can access the

full range of benefits for which they may be eligible.

### **Caregiver Support Services**

The Otsego County Office for the Aging recognizes the vital role that caregivers play in supporting older adults and offers a range of services to assist them. These Caregiver Support Services include counseling to provide emotional support and guidance to caregivers. Education and training programs are available to help caregivers develop necessary skills and knowledge. Respite care is a crucial service offered to provide temporary relief for caregivers, allowing them to take a break from their caregiving responsibilities. This respite care can take various forms, including in-home support, social adult day care programs, or short-term stays in a facility. Support groups connect caregivers with others who understand their experiences, providing a space for sharing and mutual support. The office also offers information and assistance to help caregivers navigate available resources and tools.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) is available through the Office for the Aging to eligible caregivers, providing services like counseling, information, training, respite care, and more. Eligibility for the NFCSP depends on the relationship and the age/condition of the person being cared for. The office can also provide information about the Any Care Counts - New York (ACC-NY) campaign, which supports unpaid caregivers across the state. For caregivers of individuals with dementia, the Caregiver Respite Initiative offers funding for respite services in various forms, allowing up to 120 hours of respite per year.

### **NY Connects Program**

NY Connects serves as a central and trusted point of access for individuals of all ages with disabilities, older adults, their caregivers, and professionals seeking information about long-term services and supports in New York State. This program aims to simplify the process of finding and accessing the services needed to maintain independence and quality of life. NY Connects offers free, unbiased information and assistance to help individuals make informed decisions about their long-term care options, whether they are paying privately, through insurance, or are eligible for government programs.

For seniors in Otsego County, NY Connects can provide assistance with various needs. This includes information and connections to services that assist with personal care, meals (home-delivered or congregate), adult or nursing home screening, and obtaining personal emergency response systems like Life Line. NY Connects can also help seniors find resources related to utility expenses and weatherization programs, as well as connect them with appropriate long-term care services and providers. The program can be reached at **607-547-4390**.

### **Other Available Programs**

In addition to the core service areas, the Otsego County Office for the Aging offers several

other programs to support the senior community. Project Lifesaver is available, which focuses on enhancing the safety of individuals who may wander due to cognitive impairments. The office also provides access to Legal Assistance services, offering free legal advice, counseling, and help with preparing legal documents through referrals to the Legal Aid Society of Mid New York. While a suggested contribution may be requested, no senior will be denied service due to an inability to pay.

### **Accessing Services and Contact Information**

Individuals interested in learning more about or accessing the services provided by the Otsego County Office for the Aging are encouraged to visit their official website at [www.otsegocountyny.gov/departments/office\\_for\\_the\\_aging/index.php](http://www.otsegocountyny.gov/departments/office_for_the_aging/index.php). For specific inquiries or to initiate the process of receiving services, the office can be contacted directly by phone at **(607) 547-4232** or via email at [nyconnects@otsegocountyny.gov](mailto:nyconnects@otsegocountyny.gov). The main office is located in Cooperstown at the **Meadows Office Complex - Suite 5, 140 Co Hwy 33W, Cooperstown, NY 13326**. There is also a satellite office in Oneonta at 242 Main Street, Oneonta, NY 13820, but this location is open by appointment only for the Long Term Care Program, and can be reached at (607) 547-4390. For the Restaurant Dining Program, it is advisable to contact the main office for reservation details. For transportation services, the recommended contact number is (607) 547-4232. For NY Connects, the direct phone line is **(607) 547-4390**.

The Otsego County Office for the Aging operates with the understanding that while services are provided at no charge, voluntary contributions are appreciated to help sustain and expand their programs. This is particularly noted for transportation and legal assistance services, where suggested contribution amounts exist. However, it is consistently emphasized that no individual will be denied services based on their inability or unwillingness to make a contribution. This policy ensures that all eligible seniors in Otsego County have access to the support they need, regardless of their financial situation.