TOMPKINS COUNTY
OFFICE FOR THE AGING
Aging Better, Together

Tompkins County Office for the Aging Survey, 2027-28 Proposed Plan Abstract, and Public Hearing Announcement

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging is asking the public for input regarding the services that we provide to the community. Your feedback will provide a snapshot of the current needs in our community and will be used in developing our plan for 2027-28.

The 2027-28 Proposed Plan Abstract of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging will be presented on **Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 10:30 AM at the Office for the Aging's new location, 31 Dutch Mill Road, Ithaca.** The public hearing will be recorded and available to view on our YouTube channel. The public hearing provides a venue for community members to learn about programs and services provided by the Office for the Aging. It is also an important opportunity for the public to offer feedback about issues affecting older adults in our community and to provide input for the department's plan for 2027-28.

We invite members of the public to read the attached abstract for the 2027-28 plan and provide input through a brief survey. Please access this survey by visiting https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PH27-28. If you are unable to participate in the online survey, please call our office at 607-274-5482. A staff person at the Office for the Aging will record your feedback over the phone. The survey questions are located on the following page.

For additional information regarding accessibility and accommodation regarding the public hearing please visit our website at https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging/2026-Public-Hearing

Thank you.

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging appreciates your feedback on the following questions. To answer these questions online please visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PH27-28. To answer these questions over the phone with a staff member at the Office for the Aging please call 607-274-5482.

The Office for the Aging provides a wide variety of services for older adults to help them remain independent in their home and community.

1. The following services are provided by the Office for the Aging. Do you have any suggestions on ways we could improve these services to meet the needs of the community? If yes, please identify the service and provide comments below.

   Transportation to vital services, i.e., medical appointments, food distribution
   In Home Services i.e., housekeeping, personal care, respite, case management
   Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)
   Family Caregiver Services, i.e., support groups, training, respite, case management
   Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
   Health Insurance Counseling (HIICAP)
   Information, Referral and Counseling
   Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
   Project Care Friendly Visiting Program
   Food and Nutrition Services
   Minor Home Repair Services
   CAPS Evaluations and Falls Prevention
   Elder Abuse Prevention and Legal Services
   Health Promotion and Wellness
   Scam and Fraud Prevention
   Outreach and Public Information

2. Are you in need of additional services that you have not been able to find offered in our community? If so, what are those services?

3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions related to services for older adults?



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Mission: Our mission is to assist older adults and persons with long-term care needs to live independently in their homes and communities with quality of life and dignity.

The 2027-28 Proposed Plan Abstract of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging will be presented at our public hearing, **Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 10:30 AM at the Office for the Aging's new location, 31 Dutch Mill Road, Ithaca.** The plan will also be posted on the Tompkins County Office for the Aging website. In addition, a survey link will be provided for people to access to respond to the plan and provide feedback. If you are unable to access the internet you can provide your feedback and questions by calling our office at 607-274-5482. Questions and feedback regarding the plan will be received throughout the months of November and December. The final Plan will reflect comments and suggestions made by the public.

The Proposed Plan Abstract includes findings from the following sources: the 2022 Age Friendly Ithaca and Tompkins County Action Plans, the 2023 Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults in Tompkins County, direct consumer feedback, programmatic trends, program evaluations, satisfaction surveys, information from state agencies and community partners, literature in the field of aging, observations and gaps identified throughout the year and from the sage advice from the Advisory Committee of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

Current Services: For a complete list, please see our 2025 Annual Report at https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Aging or contact our office directly to request a copy.

Directly Provided Services

- NY Connects Information, Referral and Options Counseling
- Health Insurance Counseling
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Personal Care Aide/Caregiver Respite
- EISEP Assessment and Case Management
- Falls Prevention Home Safety Assessments/CAPS Evaluations
- Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Public Information and Outreach
- Caregivers Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit
- Project CARE/Project Generations
- Gadabout Transportation Tickets
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program serving Tompkins, Chemung, and Schuyler Counties
- Social Engagement Innovations
- Yard Work/Snow Shoveling List

Subcontracted Services

- INHS:
  Minor Home Repair Program
- Foodnet Meals on Wheels:
  Senior Nutrition Program
- Lifelong:
  Senior Circle Newsletter, Mosaic Program, Health Insurance Counseling, Virtual Senior Center
- Finger Lakes Independence Center:
  Home Care Registry and Consumer Directed Personal Care Services
- Caregivers, Home Instead Senior Care, BH Cleaning Services:
  Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) Non-Medical Home Care Services
- LawNY Legal Services:
  Legal Assistance
- Human Services Coalition:
  Coordination of the Long-Term Care Committee
- GoGo Grandparent: Transportation for older adults age 60+
- Mom's Meals: Delivery meal service for older adults with special dietary needs.

Office Relocation- The most significant change in 2026 was our relocation to 31 Dutch Mill Road. Our office moved in July, and since then, we have been settling into our new surroundings while ensuring continuity of services for our clients. We are currently gathering feedback from individuals who visit our office to better understand their experiences and identify ways to ensure our new location continues to meet the needs of all those we serve.

Tompkins County Office for the Aging Plan for 2027-28

Contracts—The Office for the Aging intends to maintain all its current contracts assuming continuing availability of funds.

NY Connects—The Office for the Aging will continue to administer the NY Connects Program. This program provides residents of all ages with objective and comprehensive information about long-term care services and supports available in Tompkins County. The Office for the Aging will adhere to the NY Connects Program Standards.

Age Friendly Ithaca and Tompkins County/Tompkins County Age Friendly Center for Excellence — Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca are part of the AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities, an initiative of the World Health Organization intended to help municipalities prepare for rapid population aging. The initiative is designed to help communities and local governments incorporate healthy, age friendly principles into relevant policies and programs. Launched in 2025, Tompkins County Office for the Aging's Business Certification aims to recognize and celebrate local businesses and organizations that have taken steps to improve the experience of customers and employees of all ages and abilities. Just as there is not only one type of person, there is not only one way to be age friendly. As such, there are multiple avenues one can take to design and adapt to promote age friendly practices in one's business or organization. It is important to consider not just physical design, such as seating and infrastructure, but also graphic design of promotional materials, and the social interactions of everyday operations. Age friendly businesses and organizations are those that provide specific amenities, such as fully accessible bathrooms and well-trained customer service, to better the experience of customers of all ages. They also take specific measures to improve employee experiences, such as flexible work schedules and older employee recognition and retention programs. Currently there are over 15 organizations that have completed certification and received a recognition certificate, window stickers, flyers for patrons and are now featured on our website.

Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) Program— The Office for the Aging contracts with Doyle Medical Monitoring to offer Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) to Tompkins County residents. The contract improved the technology used in people's homes, assuring compatibility with landline, digital phones, and cell phone towers. The Office for the Aging continues to maintain its involvement in the customer service aspect of the program, with staff continuing to install PERS units in clients' homes and be available for any troubleshooting. The Office for the Aging will continue to expand new and improved

GPS device technology and work to increase the number of clients served through the PERS program by 10% and maintain those numbers in 2027.

Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program- The Office for the Aging will continue to cultivate relationships and partnerships in Tompkins, Schuyler, and Chemung Counties. Currently, we have 3 full-time staff who are certified Ombudsmen: a Program Coordinator, and 2 Outreach and Ombudsman Program Specialists. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program's efforts will be focused on increasing coverage at all facilities through increased recruitment of additional volunteers. Advocacy efforts in 2027 will be focused on increasing the Personal Needs Allowance for nursing home residents.

Policy Trends— The Office for the Aging will continue to monitor the impact of current policy and legislation on the lives of older adults. This includes the Master Plan on Aging (MPA) and the 9 core pillars:

- *Financial Sustainability of Services and Providers*
- *Caregiving, Workforce, and Community-Based Services*
- *Prevention*
- *Housing*
- *Affordability of Basic Needs*
- *Serving Historically Underserved Communities*
- *Social Engagement*
- *Combating Elder Abuse, Ageism, Ableism, and Stigma*
- *Technology*

The office will continue to support these priority areas and related initiatives by promoting community-based options, resources, and services that enable older adults to age safely, independently, and with dignity in their own homes and communities. Additionally, our office will continue efforts to streamline access to benefits and monitor issues affecting the Long-Term Services and Support (LTSS) delivery system. This includes changes to Medicaid and Medicare services, how older adults and other populations navigate these systems, and identifying and addressing gaps in service delivery. These efforts will help to ensure the continued availability of accessible, appropriate, and high-quality community -based and health care services that meet the evolving needs of older adults.

Supporting Social Engagement- We are very aware of the struggle that many older adults face with loneliness, isolation, and lack of regular companionship. As aging professionals, it is one of our goals to address and ease social isolation and loneliness and the associated health risks. In attempts to mitigate some of the devastating effects of social isolation, we began to look for innovative ways to reach people:

Project CARE Friendly Visiting Program- Project CARE matches older adults in our community with volunteer friendly visitors. These volunteers provide weekly visits to the older adult and provide socialization and engagement.

Joy For All Companion Pets- The Office for the Aging provides socially isolated clients with robotic companion pets.

VSC (Virtual Senior Center)- An active online community with live courses 12 hours a day, 365 days a year. The VSC is a constant and welcoming companion to help make meaningful connections.

Joy for All Board Games- The Joy for All Board Games are reimagined classics that meet the needs and interests of older adults – a perfect way to encourage peer to peer and multigenerational play.

Innovations in Aging- In 2026, the Office for the Aging partnered with 5 companies to improve social determinants of health through technology. According to AARP, in a 2024 survey on technology use, older adults are using technology at the same rate as individuals under the age of 50. To learn more about these and other partnerships between Age Tech companies and the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) visit www.aging.ny.gov/innovations.

SilverShield- In 2026, the Office for the Aging, through a subsidy from the New York State Office for the Aging, was able to provide 45 free SilverShield licenses to older adults in Tompkins County. SilverShield is a scam prevention assistant that empowers older adults to protect themselves from fraud. It works through text messaging, email or on the web and subscribers can access SilverShield advisors for immediate reviews of suspicious texts, emails, and messages. Responses provide a quick answer of whether the suspicious item is safe or an actual scam or fraud.

VIVO- In 2026 the Office for the Aging partnered with Vivo, an evidenced-based strength training and exercise program designed to increase strength and reduce falls and injuries related to falls. All Vivo classes are taught live by certified trainers and take place over Zoom so you can join from the comfort of your own home.

Senior Care Concierge MedQR Bracelet- In 2026, the Office for the Aging received 150 MedQR bracelets. SCC Med QR is a wristband with a scannable QR code that provides instantaneous access to crucial medical information. The Office for the Aging provides these bracelets to eligible older adults at no cost.

BetterAge- BetterAge provides older adults with personalized recommendations to live well. In 2026, the Office for the Aging partnered with BetterAge to provide this web-based platform. A health and well-being assessment, aligned with the social determinants of health, provides in-depth insight into healthy aging at every scale. A personalized health and well-being report and recommendations are provided.

Blooming Health- Blooming Health is a digital engagement platform to improve older adult's awareness and connection to community-based services. In 2026, the Office for the Aging partnered with Blooming Health to use the platform to send personalized and

targeted communications to older adults and caregivers participating in our programs through text messages, voice calls, or email.

Client Satisfaction/RBA— In 2026, the Office for the Aging worked with student interns and measured client satisfaction with the following services: NY Connects, Personal Emergency Response System (PERS), Home Delivered Meals, and Personal Care Services. Overall satisfaction with these programs was positive. Through Tompkins County's Key Performance Indicators (KPI) initiative, these particular services are measured annually. In 2027, the Office for the Aging will measure client satisfaction with the additional services of the National Family Caregiver Support Program and our Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program. This data will also be used for the purposes of funding and will be incorporated into our office's yearly budget.

In 2026 we launched a Senior Nutrition Program and Needs Assessment survey, and in 2027 we will continue to analyze results and work with our provider to incorporate this information into our programming as well as seek reasonable alternatives to meet the community need.

The Caregiver's Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit- Is designed to help caregivers provide quality care for older adults and persons with disabilities while also maintaining the quality of their own lives and the lives of their family member. We will continue to enhance our support and offerings in 2027, including promoting the following innovative resources to assist and empower caregivers.

Caregiver Assessment and Referral-

The goal of the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) is to support family caregivers so they may continue to carry out their caregiving roles and responsibilities. The program can provide services such as caregiver counseling, information and assistance, caregiver training, respite care (a break from caregiving), and much more. In 2025-26, our own personal care aides began providing respite care to eligible caregivers. In 2027, we will continue to administer this program and provide caregiving support and address the increasing needs of informal caregivers.

Transportation- GoGo Grandparents Partnership-In 2024 the Office for the Aging participated in NYSOFA's Supplemental Transportation Funding Opportunity in partnership with GoGo Grandparents to provide additional transportation options in the county. GoGo Grandparents uses sources like Uber and Lyft, with specially trained drivers and technology to offer a variety of services. For our purposes, this service will provide on demand rides for older adults age 60+. This funding partnership from NYSOFA and GoGo Grandparents allows our office to provide a limited number of rides per month. In 2026, we added to our subsidy with Unmet Need funding to provide this service and will continue to do so in 2027 as funding allows.

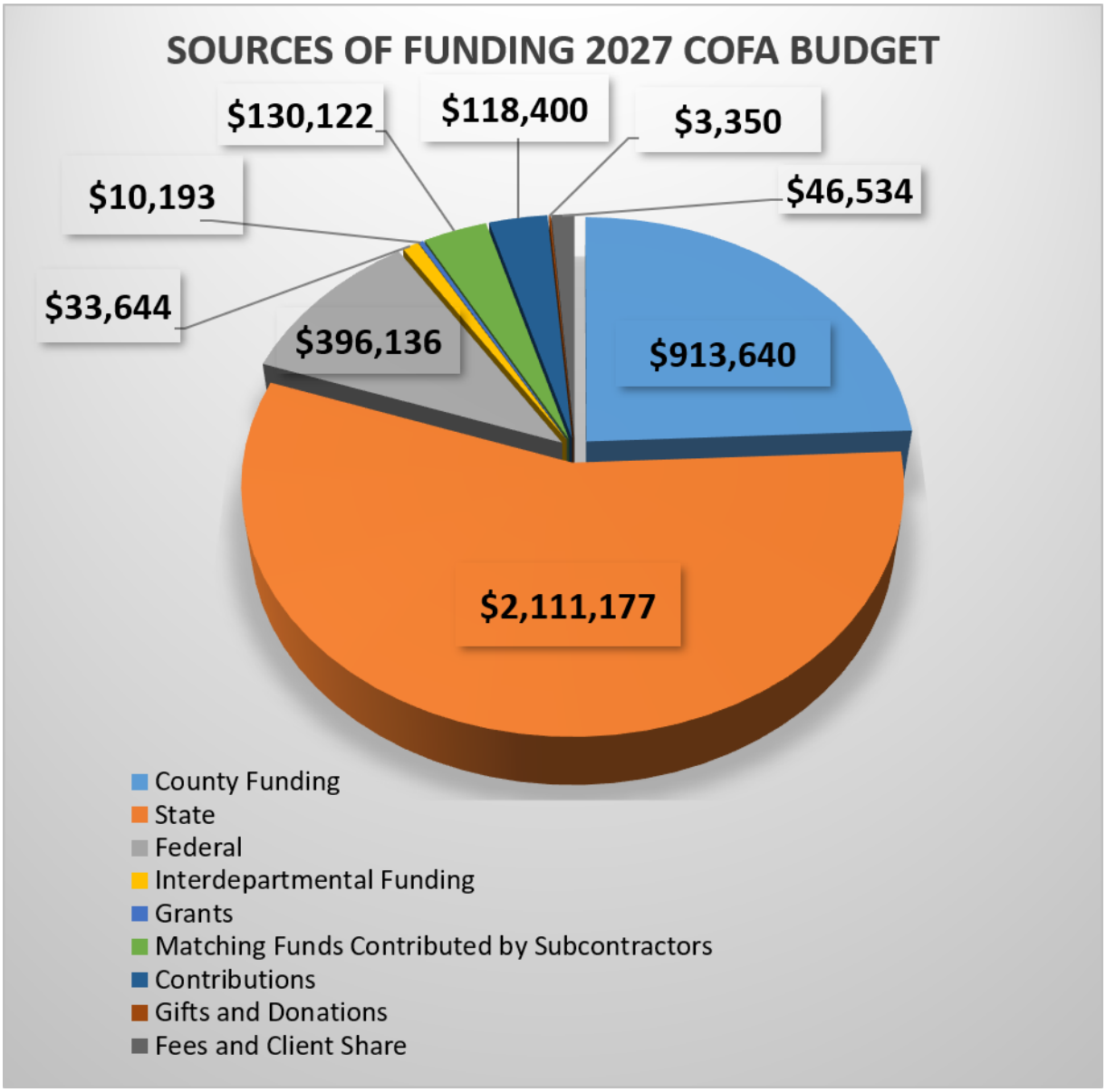
Personal Home Care Aide-In November 2022, the Office for the Aging began directly providing a Personal Home Care Aide as a result of the crisis in the workforce that we are experiencing here locally and across the state. We have been able to serve between 15 to 20

people on a regular basis, helping them to stay safely and independently in their homes. We have seen an increase in the complexity of cases and in 2025, we expanded our ability to serve these clients by hiring another part-time Personal Home Care Aide and a part-time Case Aide.

Targeting— The Office for the Aging will continue its efforts to target its services to underserved populations including non-English speakers and racial/ethnic minorities. We will strive to maintain racial and socio-economic diversity on our Advisory Committee and include older adults from all areas of Tompkins County. Outreach staff members will continue to direct efforts to older adults of lower income, those who are isolated, and those living in rural portions of the County, as well as continue to engage Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender older adults.

Unmet Needs: The Office for the Aging maintains a list of "unmet needs." These are requests for services which are currently in short supply or unavailable in Tompkins County. Efforts are currently underway among service providers, including the Office for the Aging, to address several unmet needs on this list.

- Home health aides and certified nurse aides
- Affordable, accessible housing, both subsidized and private sector
- Affordable/free moving and unpacking assistance
- Transportation escorts and scribes (accompanying for appointments or after procedures)
- Medicaid funded Assisted Living Program (ALP)/Enhanced Assisted Living option, including a dementia unit, for low- and moderate-income individuals
- Increase in the Medicaid personal needs allowance for residents of skilled nursing facilities
- Power of Attorney and Health Care Proxy representation for individuals who lack family & friends
- Assistance for de-cluttering homes for low-income individuals
- Geriatricians and geriatric nurse practitioners
- Geriatric Care Managers
- Legal assistance to assist low-income individuals understand and address code violations
- Behavioral health care for older adults in long term care facilities
- Assistance with bill paying/check book balancing services
- Public benches and resting spots for older adults who walk
- Quality, affordable dental care, especially for those with Original Medicare, Medigap or Medicaid
- Increased funding for large home repairs



FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
County Funding	$913,640
State	$2,111,177
Federal	$396,136
Interdepartmental Funding	$33,644
Grants	$10,193
Matching Funds Contributed by Subcontractors	$130,122
Contributions	$118,400
Gifts and Donations	$3,350
Fees and Client Share	$46,534
Total	$3,763,196

Funding Sources 2027-2028	2027
Alzheimer's Association of CNY Respite Grant	$10,193
Federal Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program	$34,043
Federal Home Energy Assistance Program	$33,644
Federal Medicare Improvements Patients and Providers Act	$22,951
Federal Nutrition Services for the Elderly Program	$45,680
Federal Older Americans Act: Title IIIB	$299,736
Federal Older Americans Act: Title IIIC	$588,811
Federal Older Americans Act: Title IIID	$5,652
Federal Older Americans Act: Title IIIE	$66,069
Locally Funded Small Home Repair Program	$26,525
Locally Funded Personal Emergency Response Program	$56,334
NYS Caregiver Resource Center	$19,611
NYS Community Services for the Elderly Program	$314,492
NYS NYConnects Program	$308,407
NYS Unmet Needs Program	$697,805
NYS Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program	$382,300
NYS Long Term Care Ombudsman Program	$315,519
NYS Wellness in Nutrition	$535,424
TOTAL	**$3,763,196**