

AGING - 6772, 6778

MISSION

The mission of the Department for Aging (DFA) is to empower seniors through choice, independence and dignity to remain safely in their homes and an integral part of the community. The department works to ensure that individuals, caregivers and families of varying needs can utilize a broad array of long term care services and supports in the community to either delay or minimize the need for higher levels of care.

ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT

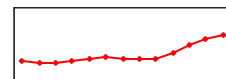
As Albany County embarks on a path to progressively reshape its long term care system, the Department for Aging (DFA) will play an increasingly critical role in ensuring that quality services are available to meet people's needs as they occur in the community. Supporting elderly and/or disabled individuals and their caregivers as their needs arise will help them remain in the least restrictive levels of care and avoid more intensive, more costly care. Programs administered to this end include the following:

- **Albany County-New York Connects**, the first link to long term care services in Albany County, is operated jointly by Albany County Department of Social Services and DFA. Albany County-NY Connects provides information and assistance to individuals, their family members and professionals to assist with navigating the long term care system and accessing appropriate services. A Transitional Care Coordination program was added to the County's Point of Entry this year, and has already had success in assisting individuals with long term care needs to remain in their own homes.
- **Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP)** assists seniors who need help with activities of daily living (e.g., dressing, bathing, personal care) and instrumental activities of daily living (e.g., shopping, housekeeping, cooking) and are not eligible for Medicaid.
- The **Adult Day Care Program** provides functionally impaired individuals with socialization, supervision and monitoring, personal care and nutrition in a protective setting.
- **Family Caregiver Support Services** include support groups, individual counseling, caregiver training and respite care to temporarily relieve caregivers. These programs make it possible for caregivers to avoid burn out and ease the stress of caring for a loved one.
- The **Home Delivered Meals Program** provides meals for home-bound seniors unable to prepare their own meals and who lack a caregiver or other social supports to help them with such activities. Through the **Congregate Dining Program**, more mobile seniors have access to nutritious meals at sites throughout the County.
- **Transportation Services** foster independence and enable individuals to access critical care and community services, including medical appointments, senior centers, grocery shopping and recreational opportunities.
- Senior volunteers provide companionship and support to homebound elderly through telephone calls, visits, and assistance with shopping as part of the **In-Home Contact and Support Program**. This program alleviates isolation and facilitates early identification of needs, avoiding crises that might otherwise develop.

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- In addition to nursing assessments for Home Delivered Meals clients, the Department for Aging, in conjunction with the centralized assessment unit within the Point of Entry, will conduct nursing assessments for clients receiving Adult Day Care.
- County funding for EISEP has kept pace with demand for the program, and in 2011 will be held constant. The

APPROPRIATION HISTORY



1998:	\$3,648,990
1999:	\$3,521,032
2000:	\$3,486,727
2001:	\$3,670,531
2002:	\$3,861,494
2003:	\$3,920,620
2004:	\$3,727,696
2005:	\$3,763,179
2006:	\$3,895,055
2007:	\$4,306,976
2008:	\$5,054,859
2009:	\$5,669,900
2010:	\$6,116,126

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department for the Aging
County of Albany
162 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210
Office: (518) 447-7198
Fax: (518) 447-7188

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Department will seek to direct resources towards clients with the highest level of needs.

- Staff will be reduced by one managerial position, the Deputy Director, to more appropriately reflect the needs of the department based on the current number of staff.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Department has seen an increase in demand for all of its services, while at the same time funding for these services has remained flat or decreased. In the coming year, the Department will strengthen assessment and monitoring services to ensure that programs target individuals with the most pressing needs and offer the most appropriate services as needs change.

The County introduced a Consumer Directed component of EISEP as part of the Community Living Program grant this year. The Consumer Directed model will allow 40 clients when fully implemented to exercise more flexibility and freedom of choice because clients can hire and manage their own caregivers. This is particularly helpful in more remote areas of the County where transportation of agency personnel is costly as neighbors and relatives can be hired to assist those wishing to remain at home.

Albany County is also participating in the Aging and Disability Resource Centers initiative to develop systems for empowering individuals to navigate their health and long term support options. The goal of the program is to expand and improve counseling, increase consumer access to community based services and facilitate person-centered transitions from hospitals, nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities to community-based services thereby preventing otherwise unnecessary re-hospitalizations, emergency room visits or nursing home placements after discharge.

The ability of Albany County to continue to provide these crucial services for hundreds of individuals who want to remain in their homes is only possible if resources are available to support community based care. If the Nursing Home continues to drain the County's financial resources for a single inflexible model of institutional care, we will be unable to provide more long-term care choices to more of Albany's citizens of all ages. The Department for Aging, now and in the future, is critical to ensuring that the infrastructure necessary to support home and community based care exists so that seniors and individuals with disabilities can have choice, independence and dignity.