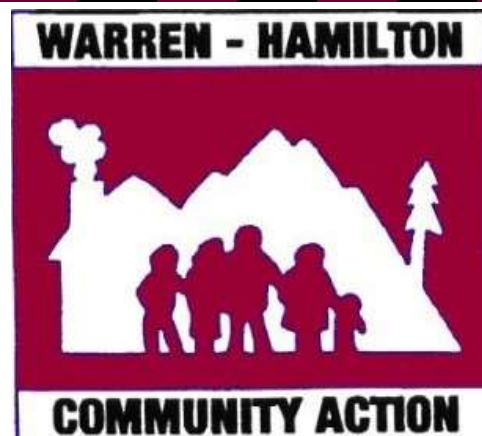


# WARREN-HAMILTON COUNTIES ACEO, INC.

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



### Message from the Executive Director

2024 has been a very good year for this Community Action Agency. The Agency's funding has been ample and stable, the Board of Directors is full with concerned, caring people and the Agency's staff, for the most part, remains the same as last year. Improvements have been made to the building and its immediate surroundings, making for a more pleasant place to be for all. Stability, to this extent is something that I have not had the opportunity in the last 38 years to really grow into. If I believed it was going to stay this way, I could almost start to worry about being bored. However, our service numbers keep rising along with the intensity of the needs that we are seeing. Homelessness, is no longer an invisible problem in the area. Its visible in the parks, in the woods and on the street corners. These challenges have always been present but seem more acute right now, so boredom would probably not be a problem anyway.

Politics, should not enter the picture when an entity is simply trying to make things better for people who are struggling. However, politics has a way of entangling itself into all sorts of things. Due to the nature of Community Action Agencies, politics has the potential to make or break us. 88% of this agency's budget is derived from Federal Funds, which makes it totally reliant on the whims of whoever is currently in power. Yesterday, David Bradley of the National Community Action Foundation addressed the country-wide Community Action Network on what impact the recent elections might have on the main programs, Community Service Block Grant, Weatherization and Head Start, that are administered by agencies. Mr. Bradley has been with the Foundation for around 40 years and in his capacity as lobbyist he has never let the network down. Even now he is optimistic and excited about what lies ahead and stated that by next July we should know which way the wind will blow. Let us hope, for those all over this great country who rely on Community Action Agencies that he is right.

Sincerely,

Lynn Ackershoeck  
Executive Director



Chris Anderson,  
from the Knights  
of Columbus  
Council # 194,  
delivers their  
annual donation  
of new children's  
winter coats.

They are very  
much  
appreciated!

## Message from the Board President

As we approach the end of 2024, I believe we have achieved our mission to coordinate resources and programs to nurture equal opportunity for low income, elderly and disabled residents.

I'm appreciative of Director Lynn and her staff for completing our mission purpose. I thank the Board for their participation in completing our mission for another year.



Jim Campinell  
Board President



### Weatherization hard at work

### Noteworthy Consumer Statistics

During PY 2024, 1,011 unduplicated households completed Agency intakes to receive services of those:

**8% were homeless**

**15% had no income**

**22% did not graduate high school**

**58% were female**

**43% had income derived from SSA, SSI or SSD**

**18% were single parents**

Here in the Adirondacks we often experience dramatic and unpredictable changes in the weather, which we have no control over and must adapt to the aftermath. Now put yourself into the lives of those who frequently encounter upheaval when least expected. They come in during a time when they are struggling; feel as if they have hit rock bottom and have no place to turn. They want to find change; improve their current situation in order to find some sort of stability and independence despite the overwhelming obstacles they face.

We work with many great families who often to no fault of their own find themselves faced with having to choose between putting food on their table or paying one of many bills, which will allow them to keep a roof over their heads. Their struggles are real and the choices are hard. Housing, employment, childcare and transportation are huge obstacles for nearly everyone here in Hamilton County. Those with limited resources often see these opportunities as being unobtainable.

There is a feeling of loneliness when you have no idea where to turn. Loneliness is scary. It can lead to stress, exhaustion and feeling down right defeated. I can attest to those feelings especially when we want to do more for those than our budget allows. Fortunately, we are not alone; we have become masters at making referrals and networking with agencies, which receive government funding and can offer a plethora of services. It's uplifting when you work with others who have similar goals.

Assistance is available! Individuals are provided with the tools and means in order to move forward. Tools are very valuable and useful during one's lifetime, however financial assistance provides temporary support as one battles with uncertainty. It's a chance to adjust and recharge; much like dormancy provides time to build strength during hardship in order to thrive in the aftermath.

Our primary responsibility is to offer appropriate nutrition, through our food pantry, to those who are in need. With our relationship with the Regional Food Bank, we have the ability to purchase nutritional and wholesome foods at a reasonable cost. By utilizing the grants offered through the food bank (USDA, HPNAP, and Nourish NY) and reaping the rewards of donated products (16¢ per pound) we are able to stretch our dollars. This allows us some freedom and wiggle room to assist individuals and families in ways, which other agencies may not have the capability to do so.

Due to the magnitude of non-restrictive funding we receive (72%) and donations from patrons we provided the following services this year: school supplies to 88 children along with backpacks to 41; a minimum of 6 gifts, stocking stuffers, books, and a stuffed animal to 90 children for Christmas; 44 turkeys and fixings were distributed to families for Thanksgiving; 17 hams and 13 turkeys with fixings to 30 families for Christmas; 671 pounds of produce was donated from gardeners & farmers markets; and 670 pks of seeds were distributed to 91 individuals.

We will continue to build relationships, within as well as out of the county, in an effort to address poverty. As a whole there is so much more, we can accomplish than working alone.

Debby Ameden  
Hamilton County Client Service Director



Lynn Ackershoek - Executive Director  
 Kathy French - Fiscal Officer  
 Michael Lajeunesse - Case Manager/Emerg. Servs  
 Stephanie Gulick - ASP Director  
 Jim Wood - Warren County NOC Worker  
 Theresa Whiting - Warren County NOC Worker  
 Deborah Ameden - Hamilton County Director  
 Darci Swieton - Hamilton County NOC Worker

Andrew Pritchard - Weatherization Director  
 John Miller - Weatherization Admin. Assistant  
 Andy McMurray - Energy Auditor  
 Ryan St. Amour - Energy auditor  
 Robert Petty - Weatherization Foreman  
 Randy Davidson - Weatherization Foreman  
 Joshua Flewelling - Weatherization Laborer  
 David Blackmere—Weatherization Laborer



## Happening in Hamilton County

### 2023-24 Funding Sources

NYS Department of State - Community Service Block Grant  
 NYS Homes and Community Renewal - Weatherization  
 NYS Housing Trust Fund—Rural Preservation Program  
 NYS Department of Education - Summer Lunch Program  
 NYSEDA - Empower New York  
 Warren County Probation & Youth Bureau - Alternative Sentencing Program

Glens Falls Community Development - Project Option  
 Regional Food Bank of NENY, Charles Wood Foundation, Stewarts, National Grid, Local private Corporations &  
 Local Retailers, Service Organizations, Farmers and Individuals

**Thank You!**

## 2024 Board of Directors

### Public

John Strough - 1st Vice Pres.  
Frank Thomas - Treasurer  
Ed Donahue  
Nancy Turner  
Betsy Bain

### Private

Jim Campinell - President  
Viki Anderson  
Cathy Catalfamo  
Armand (Chuck) Frigon  
Rachel Fortini Valk

### Low-income

Roberta Bly  
Shari Marci - Secretary  
Joanne Matthews  
Sheila Edwards  
Hana Hall

## Alternative Sentencing

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to all of the facilities that support this program. Thank you for taking participants from this program and allowing them to volunteer at your non-profit organization. "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." (Aesop's The Lion and the Mouse.)

In the past year this program has had about 173 participants. There were 87 males and 69 females between the ages of 22-80 years of age. Also, there were 17 youths in total between the ages of 15-21. While crunching some numbers, It is calculated that 75% of the participants completed the program satisfactorily. I feel that it has been an exceptional year for participants completing their court-ordered community service. This leads me into my next finding.

The clients have been in the range from twenty-two years of age up to clients in their mid-sixties. Are the youth behaving themselves or just having to pay fines? One my never know. The last thing I looked into was the fact that the participants this year have been "new" ones. By this, I mean I have seen less returning clients then in years past. Folks are completing the service and learning from their mistakes.

In closing, I would like to give a shout out to The Little Theater on the Farm. The owner has always been willing to take participants from this program and more than two or three at a time. She has been really sick and in the hospital. I got word she is out and at home and once again taking volunteers. Also, the program just got accepted to send volunteers to The Quarry House in Glens Falls. Thank you, Dr. Bill Brender. I hope the volunteers don't let either of these facilities down!!

Warmest Regards,

Stephanie (ASPD)



**Stephanie and  
volunteer Kimani  
Emmanuel await the  
delivery of more  
Postal Food Drive  
food**

## Some 2024 Highlights

|                           | Warren | Hamilton | Wash | Additionally in Warren County                     |
|---------------------------|--------|----------|------|---|
| Emergency Food Baskets    | 896    | 774      |      |   |
| Food Pantry Visits        | 21,894 | 630      |      | 580 Summer Lunches served                         |
| Clothing Depot Visits     | 6,345  | 986      |      | 4,993 Volunteer hours (Both Counties)             |
| Weatherization Units      | 24     | 3        | 43   | 102 Successful Alternative Sentencing Completions |
| Emergency Services        | 23     | 10       |      | 669,136 pounds of donated food received           |
| Transportation Trips made |        | 147      |      |   |
| RPP Housing Assistance    | 32     | 84       |      |   |

## Weatherization

Warren-Hamilton Counties Weatherization Assistance Program had a successful 2023-24 contract year completing 72 units in Warren, Hamilton, and Washington Counties. This was the third year Warren-Hamilton served Washington County under its Weatherization Assistance Program. The homes in all 3 counties cover a total 3586 square miles.

Warren-Hamilton received \$881,276 in funding for the 2023-24 contract year giving us the ability to weatherize 72 homes with an average cost per unit of \$8152. The allocation for this year's 2024-25 contract is \$1,077,770 allowing us to weatherize 76 homes with a CPU of \$8497.00. We are also in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a two year contract with the BIL grant we received. BIL stands for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. With the BIL Grant we were allocated \$719,971.00. This allows us to weatherize an additional 64 homes.

### **A little bit about what we do:**

Weatherization has a goal to lower our client's energy bills while making their homes more comfortable. We perform an energy audit to see which measures are necessary for each of our client's homes. Our crews go out and perform the work. A typical work scope would generally include airsealing in the attic and basement, weatherstripping and doorsweeps for exterior doors, electric reduction measures such as installing LED light bulbs, adding pipewrap, duct sealing, and adding insulation. In some cases we use subcontractors to perform additional home performance measures or heating system repairs or replacements.

**Accomplishments:** We've had continued success completing our contract obligation with the State installing energy reduction measures to our income qualified homes.

We have great staff performing professional work while keeping our clients very satisfied.

We procured 2 new auditor vehicles with our WAP Contract and our BIL Contract funding the purchase of each vehicle.

### **Programs we coordinate with and refer clients to:**

Warren-Hamilton still continues to coordinate and work with other programs such as NYSEDA and our local Department of Social Services. We also refer our clients to Rebuilding Together Saratoga, The Pride of Ticonderoga, and USDA. We have and will continue to work together to leverage funds from these other programs to provide the best services for our clients.

The Weatherization Assistance Program is a free program for income qualified homes. If a household receives HEAP that automatically makes a household income eligible for our services. Proof of income through pay stubs is also an acceptable proof of income. To find out more about the Weatherization Assistance Program please call us at (518) 793-0636. We mail or email applications out or they can be picked up at Community Action Agency at our 190 Maple Street address here in Glens Falls, M-F. They can also be picked up at our Hamilton County Community Action Agency location next to the Town Movie Theater at 726 Main St, Indian Lake, NY 12842.

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is administered in NY State by Homes & Community Renewal (HCR). HCR receives funding from the US Departments of Energy (DOE), and Health and Human Services (HSS).

Andy Pritchard  
Weatherization Director

## Project Option

During the previous 12 months the Project Option case manager provide advocacy for 42 households in Warren County. This included helping 10 individuals who were unemployed obtain employment, which was achieved by completing online applications and transportation to job interviews. In addition, 6 families who were homeless obtained safe, affordable housing. The case manager completed Section 8 Housing Choice voucher applications on the client's behalf. He and clients worked as partners to locate and obtain apartments. While waiting for their vouchers to become available, clients obtained assistance through Warren County Department of Social Services and enrolled in the Rental Supplement Program (RSP). Clients had to document they were on the Section 8 waiting list to obtain the temporary subsidy. Warren County paid about 2/3 of the client's rent until their Section 8 Voucher became available, which made obtaining and keeping an apartment feasible. Case manager has noticed an alarming increase in homeless families with young children in their household.

Michael Lajeunesse

Project Option Case Manager

## Emergency Services

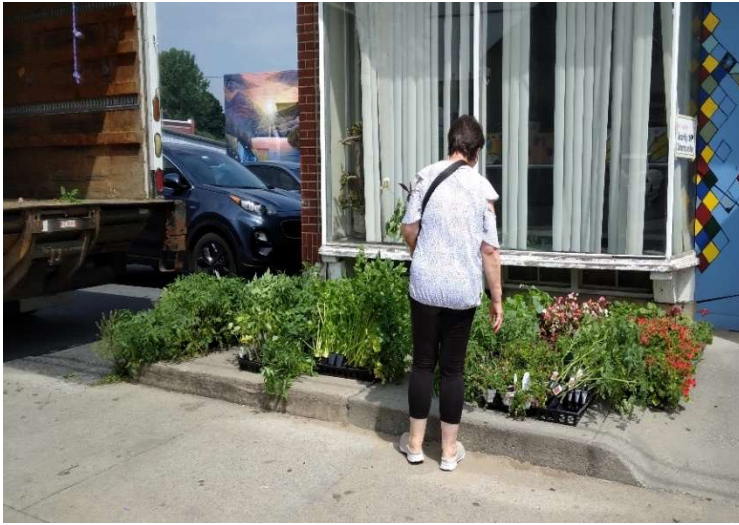
During the 2023-2024 fiscal year Warren-Hamilton Counties Community Action Agency prevented 24 households from becoming homeless by paying their rental arrears. Of these families, 14 contained single mothers, 8 had both parents, while 2 were single fathers. A total of 44 children resided in the households with 27 being under the age of 10. Termination from employment was the leading cause of delinquency for 6 families, while expired unemployment benefits, couples separating, reduced hours at work, and medical emergencies accounted for 2 households each. In addition to paying back rent, Community Action provided emergency housing for 19 homeless families. Of these households, 10 were single mothers, 8 had both parents while 1 was a single father. A total of 32 children resided in these homes, with 16 under the age of 10. The leading cause of homelessness was eviction after the sale of their building, which occurred to 3 families. While lost income from couples separating, drug abuse, and rent being raised to unaffordable amounts resulted in 2 families each becoming homeless. Disconnected youth were the head of 4 of these families, with ages ranging from 20-23 years old. Community Action received login credentials for the Care & Share program on February 20<sup>th</sup> and completed 22 applications for Warren County residents before the program closed. Designed to supplement the HEAP program, \$200 was provided to eligible households for National Grid or heating fuel.

Michael Lajeunesse

Emergency Services Director



## Community Support - THANK YOU!!



### SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

Warren-Hamilton Counties Community Action is on FACEBOOK. You can look the facility up through our name or [facebook.com/wahaaceo](https://facebook.com/wahaaceo).

Take the time to check us out and give the page a thumbs-up. When you do, it spreads the word that we are out there for the community. The page will provide a browser of our information and what services we offer. Posted on the FACEBOOK page you will also find some pictures of the facility.

Have a question for the staff at the agency? Feel free to message us online and we will respond in a timely manner to direct you to the proper staff person.

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