



Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc.

AREA PLAN ON AGING 2026-2029

ELDER SERVICES OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING SERVING
SENIORS OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY

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ELDER SERVICES OF BERSKIRE COUNTY AREA PLAN ON AGING 2025-2029

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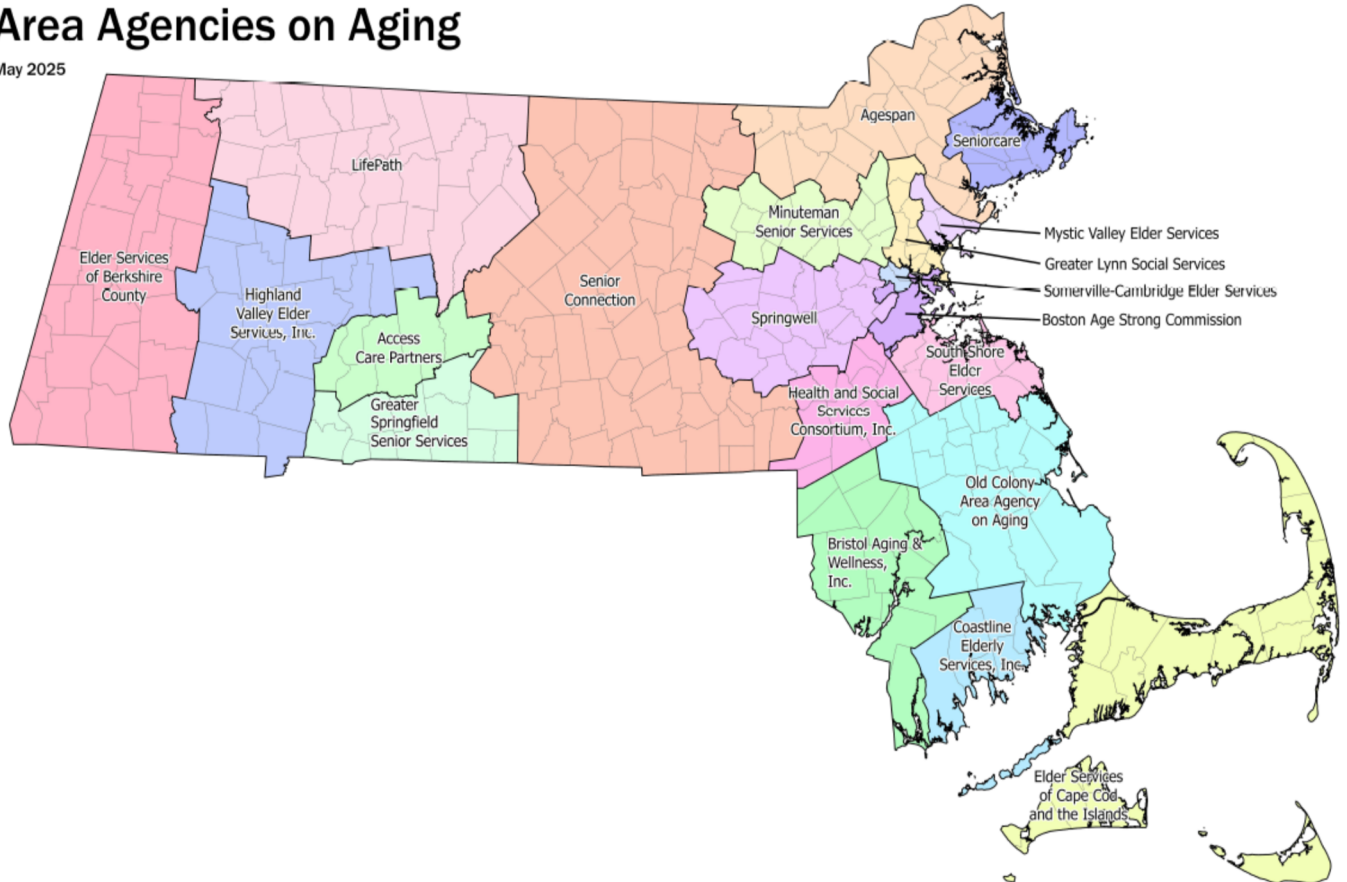
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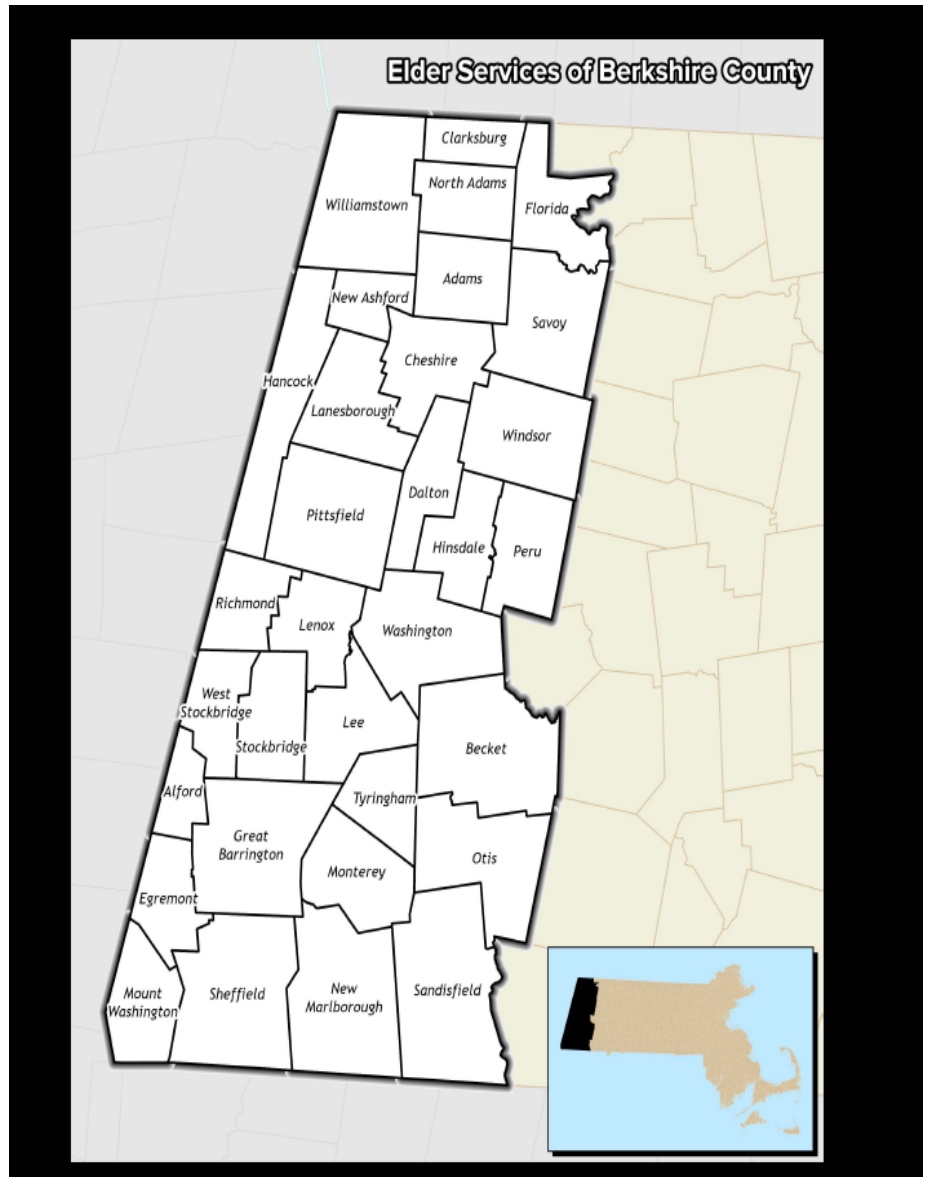
Massachusetts Area Agencies on Aging

May 2025



TOWNS & CITIES OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY ESBCI SERVICE

Adams
Alford
Becket
Cheshire
Clarksburg
Dalton
Egremont
Florida
Great Barrington
Hancock
Hindsdale
Lanesborough
Lee
Lenox
Monterey
Mt. Washington
New Ashford
New Marlborough
North Adams *
Otis
Peru
Pittsfield *
Richmond
Sandisfield
Sheffield
Stockbridge
Tyringham
Washington
West Stockbridge
Williamstown
Windsor



* North Adams and Pittsfield are
the two cities in Berkshire County

Executive Summary

Development of the Area Plan for the next year, let alone the next four years, can only be completed in a sound manner if we consider the current “environment” which now exists. The financial stability, specifically at the state and federal levels, is uncertain at best. The impact of any changes in these funding sources will adversely affect ESBCI’s ability to provide the programs and services for the seniors of Berkshire County. While our overall goal has been to meet the needs of the ever growing requirements of our seniors and caregivers, we find ourselves in a space that is unfamiliar to us. Our overall goal is to maintain the excellent level of services that we currently provide, address the needs of the target populations and provide programs that reach diverse populations. There is little financial latitude to contemplate the notion of adding or significantly increasing our capacity considering the environment in which we are operating.

The alarms have been sounded at the State level with the Massachusetts budget threatening our vital Home Care Services Program for older adults. These services range from homemaking, personal care and complex care oversight by nurses. These programs are critical for helping older adults live independently and safely in their homes while enhancing their quality of life and reducing health care costs. The number of individuals receiving these programs is currently “capped.”

The Berkshire County State Home Care Services, Meals on Wheels and other programs help older adults live with dignity, independence and improved quality of life and delaying or preventing the need for more expensive nursing home care. The services provided through the State Home Care Program are integral to the county’s long-term care system. That being said, the State miscalculated the projected volume of seniors who would require State Home Care. This number was significantly underestimated and thus two key line items for the FY 25 State budget were severely underfunded in the amount of approximately \$50,000,000. This is the scenario with zero growth in the number of seniors we assist. With the anticipated case load growth rate of 8.0 % the deficit for this critical program will balloon. The State is in the process of developing a plan addressing the underfunding which may include wait lists and capping the services that can be provided.

The Meals on Wheels is experiencing significant increases in all program costs including raw food, mileage for delivery drivers, wages the cost of supplies and utilities which have contributed to a significant increase in the cost of preparing and delivering food. Pre-COVID the cost to prepare and deliver a meal was approximately \$9.50—today the cost is \$12.55 with the cost of supplies and food increasing every day. Additionally, we anticipate a significant decrease in cash credit that we have historically received from the USDA Commodity Program and we have been notified that \$111,000 of Federal Nutrition Incentive Program (NSIP) funding has been suspended.

The national scene is, to say, tumultuous at best. Proposed funding and staffing cuts change from day to day with no forethought of the lives affected by the slashing of programs. If the Veterans Programs, SNAP, Medicaid let alone Medicare and Social Security are decimated as promised, seniors, caregivers and individuals with handicaps are rightfully worried for their futures. If these programs are indeed cut these cuts have a domino effect. More individuals will be food insecure and turning to the Meals on Wheels Program that does not have the capacity of add hundreds more to our roster. Health care insecurity will over- burden the SHINE Program and nursing clinical assessments.

It is highly challenging to operate and meet the needs of seniors in this unsure financial support world. We are taking a deep breath and with a new astute vigilance we are keeping our fingers on the pulse of local, state and federal funding environments and will, when possible identify alternative funding sources to supplement programs expenses and thus, where possible, maintain our levels of services. The draft of the Plan will be provided to the community for comment. The Plan will be available on ESBCI's webpage, www.esbci.org, and distributed to stake holders such as members of the Advisory Council.

BACKGROUND

The following is Information and data considered in the development of the Area Plan for Elder Service of Berkshire County

Mission of US Administration for Community Living (ACL)

ACL's mission is to maximize the independence, well-being and health of older adults and people with disabilities across their lifespan and support their families and caregivers through a comprehensive, coordinated system of home and community-based services that help elderly individuals maintain their health and independence in their home and communities.

Mission of The Executive Office of Aging & Independence (AGE)

AGE supports aging adults to live and thrive, safely and independently—how and where they want with the vision of a state where every person has the tools, resources, and support they need to fully embrace the aging experience.

AGES's mission is to promote the independence, empowerment and well-being of older adults, individual with disability and their caregivers through a continuum of services that are responsive to the needs of constituents, families and caregivers. Older adults and individuals with disabilities will have access to the resources they need to live well and thrive in their communities.

Mission of Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc. (ESBCI)

The mission of ESBCI is to provide Berkshire elders, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities the opportunity to live with dignity, independence and self-determination and to achieve the highest possible quality of life.

DEMOGRAPHICS- Berkshire County Massachusetts – Population 126,818

Berkshire County is the western-most of the 14 counties in Massachusetts running along the New York border from Vermont to the north to Connecticut in the south and encompasses most of the mountain ridge that separate the Hudson and Connecticut River Valleys. The 32 communities of Berkshire County cover nearly 927 square miles and have an overall population density of 140 person per square mile compared to 835 persons per square mile for the Commonwealth. With about 12% of the land mass and only 2% of the population Berkshire County is the second most rural county in the state.

**POPULATION DATA for TOWNS & CITIES IN BERKSHIRE COUNT WITH % OF TOTAL
POPULATION 65 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER**

TOWN	Total Population	% of Population 65 years and older
Adams	8,149	25.2%
Alford	450	42.4%
Becket	2,105	21.8%
Cheshire	3,239	26.1%
Clarksburg	1,713	25.7%
Dalton	6,332	24.6%
Florida	796	19.1%
Great Barrington	7,184	22.1%
Hancock	772	22.9%
Hindsdale	1,791	24.8%
Lanesborough	3,037	25.2%
Lee	5,765	30.4%
Monterey	983	45.1%
New Ashford	262	25.2%
New Marlborough	1,550	23.1%
North Adams	12,937	20.6%
Otis	1,478	24.6%
Peru	670	20.9%
Pittsfield	43,730	20.0%
Richmond	1,435	33.8%
Sandisfield	960	28.2%
Savoy	620	33.2%
Stockbridge	1,933	43.6%
Tyringham	484	34.1%
Washington	454	36.8%
West Stockbridge	1,220	23.2%
Williamstown	7,630	24.2%
Windsor	1,030	17.7%

***2025 MA Healthy Aging Community Profile**

Berkshire County has less racial and ethnic diversity than other counties though the population is beginning to shift with the increase in the Hispanic and Latinix populations.

Berkshire County	% Population	% of Individuals 60+Years Old
White	91.8%	94%
Black/African American	3.6%	2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	.3%	0%
Asian	1.7%	1%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.1%	.1%
Hispanic/Latinx	5.1%	2%

Source: U.S. Census

NEEDS ASSESSMENT –Top needs identified by Older Adults (in ranking order)

Top Needs Identified in 2025 Community Needs Assessment Project

In-Home Support for Independence	56%
Nutrition Support	42.9%
Access to Services	41.7%
Transportation Access	40.5%
Long-Term Services & Supports	39.3%
Affordable Health Care/Access to Health Care	38.1% / 34.5%
Housing Accessibility & Maintenance	33.3%

* Followed by Social Isolation (30.4%), Safety & Security (29.8%) & Mental Behavioral Support (28.6%)

NEEDS ASSESSMENT– Caregivers Supports (in ranking order)

Top Needs Identified in 2025 Needs Assessment Project

Respite Care	67.4%
Training & Education	60.5%
Community Resources	55.8%
In-Home Care	48.8%
Mental Health Support	44.2%
Financial Assistance	41.9%

* Followed by Care Coordination (37.2%)

In addition to the surveys received during the official survey timeline, ESBCI received an addition 20 surveys which were separately tabulated. The results of those 20 additional surveys are consistent with the original sampling.

In a comparison of the needs identified in the most current (fall 2024/2025) Needs Assessment with the prior needs assessment survey conducted in 2020 overall there is a marginal difference

in the needs identified. Seniors overwhelmingly want and need resources so they can remain independent. Home Health Care, identified by many as a need and priority provides a significant contributing factor for seniors to maintain their independence. Home Health Care, also identified by caregivers as a priority. The program relieves some of the burden on family caregivers.

In-Home Support, Access to Transportation, Social Isolation and availability to Nutrition are consistently identified as important needs over the past five year. Many of these needs identified are indicative of the overall needs in Berkshire County and in large part due to the Berkshires being a vastly rural area.

FOCUS AREAS

As the Area Agency on Aging for all of Berkshire County, Elder Services offers programs and services in accordance with The Executive Office of Aging and Independence (AGE) and the Administration for Community Living (ACL). ESBCI's mission, goals, objectives and program planning directly align with the missions, strategies, goals and target populations of ACL and AGE.

Administration for Community Living/ Executive Office of Aging and Independence	Elder Services of Berkshire County's Focus Areas
Older Americans Act Core Programs (Title III) Supportive Services, Nutrition Services, Disease Prevention / Health Programming, Caregiver Programs and Title VII Programs including Long-Term Care Ombudsman and Elder Protective Services	Information & Referral, Community Volunteer Programs, Home Delivered and Senior Meal Site Meals, Family Caregiver Support, Long Term Ombudsman Program , Outreach, (Berkshire Senior TV & Berkshire Senior Newspaper), and Title III Sub Grants.
Older Americans Act Core Program	
Participant-Directed/Person-Centered Programs that provide older adults and their family caregivers choice over long-term services and support they need for seniors to remain in their homes.	Money Management, SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs for Everyone), Rainbow Seniors of Berkshire County, Options Counseling, Behavioral Health Outreach for Aging Populations, Clinical Assessment and Case Management and Home Health Care Programming.
Elder Justice	Community Legal Aid, (Berkshire Elder Law Project), Berkshire Center of Justice (Justice for Elder Project)
	Berkshire Elder Protective Service is a program provided through a contract with LifePath, Inc and a component of LifePath's Area Plan

- ***Supportive Housing is a collaboration between Elder Services of Berkshire County and the Pittsfield Housing Authority at Providence Court to provide residents with on-site services that promote independence and the opportunity to age in place.***

- ***ESBCI Coordinates and manages Title III Sub Grant contracts with community agencies that provide services for seniors and caregivers including: Legal Services, Support & Education for Family Caregivers (AHEC), Transportation (Adams COA and Sheffield COA) and Rainbow Seniors (support and programming for LGBTQIA+ seniors)***

2024/2025 Title III Sub Grant Agencies/Programming

Agency	Project/Services Provided
Community Legal Aid-Berkshire Elder Law Project	Free legal services for low income and socially needy seniors in Berkshire County with special focus on seniors who reside in their homes with the assistance of government benefits, seniors with protective services, seniors with no other means to access the legal system and seniors whose legal issues threaten their independence and dignity.
Berkshire Center for Justice-Justice for Elders Project	Provides free legal services for low income and socially needy seniors with special focus on seniors who reside in their homes in Berkshire County with assistance of government benefits, seniors with protective services, seniors with no other means to access the legal system and seniors whose legal issues threaten their independence and dignity
Adams Council on Aging	Provides transportation for residents 60 years and older for the seniors residing in the rural communities of Adams, Cheshire and Savoy with priority given to those seniors with the greatest social and economics needs.
Sheffield Council on Aging	Provides transportation for individuals 60 years and older for seniors living in the rural communities of Sheffield and Ashley Falls. The program gives priority to those elders with the greatest social and economic needs
Berkshire Rainbow Senior	Provides Berkshire County's senior LGBTQ+ community support through programming, education and resources and outreach in Berkshire County with a focus on outreach to rural and socially and geographically isolated seniors.
Berkshire Area Health Education Center (AHEC)	Provides educational support and workshops for family and professional caregivers of individuals 60 year of age and older with emphasis on meeting the needs of low income and minority seniors through outreach and community collaborations.

Target Populations

Elder Services of Berkshire County will continue to integrate ACL focus areas with populations targeted by the Older American Act and Title III services. Title III funding formula targets older individuals with the greatest economic need and older individuals with greatest social need with particular attention to low-income individuals and those living in rural areas. ESBCI's doors are open to anyone needing information or access to programs and services. The Older American Act, the law under which ESBCI maintains its designation as an Area Agency on Aging, identifies these priority populations:

1. Living Alone (isolated) Elders
2. Low Income Elders
3. Minority Elder Populations
4. Native American Populations (not applicable)
5. Rural Older Adult Populations
6. Socially Isolated Populations (ei. geographic, LGBTQIA+, limited English proficient older adults, and other socially isolated populations).

* Berkshire County is considered a rural community with a high number of seniors living on fixed incomes/and are low income.

OLDER AMERICAN ACT CORE PROGRAMS

As the Area Agency on Aging for Berkshire County, Elder Services of Berkshire provides and will continue to offer and when resources exist-expand Older American Act/Title III Programs including:

- Community Volunteer Services
- Information & Referral
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Title III Sub Grants
- Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Home Delivered Meals and Senior Meal Site Meals
- Outreach & Community Education

* Services provided under Volunteer Services are grocery shopping assistance, companionship and Transportation.

In the next twelve months expanding to the next four years of planning, ESBCI will continue to provide Older American/Title III Programs to seniors, caregivers and individuals with disabilities targeting those persons over the age of 60 who are rural seniors and seniors with the greatest economic needs and low-income minority persons. (HUD designates seniors –especially seniors living in rural communities-as being “categorically low-income.”) ESBCI will also target seniors who are isolated geographically or socially and will continue to address food insecurity and financial insecurity.

ESBCI SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Meals on Wheels and Meals Sites

Currently ESBCI's Senior Nutrition Program prepares and delivers approximately 975 to 1,000 meals each day, five days a week. We also provide noon-time meals for 15 meal site locations throughout Berkshire County including kosher meals through the Jewish Federation. Home delivered meals are provided for

homebound seniors, senior who are unable to prepare nutritionally balanced meals for themselves or who have no one to cook for them. We anticipate that the number of seniors accessing Meals on Wheels and meals at the Senior Meal Sites will continue to increase as on community continues to age and as the cost of groceries increases. Pre-COVID We were preparing and delivering approximately 875 meals each day. Hunger and lack of nutrition are serious threats to the physical and mental-well-being of seniors. The most recent (year-end 2024) Nutrition Consumer survey indicates that

- 86% of all respondents state that the meals help them eat healthier
- 84% reported that the meals help them live independently
- Over 40% of respondents stated that without the meals there would be a shortage of food in their Home

Almost all respondent report that the well-being checks that accompanies every meal delivered makes them feel safer, less vulnerable and less lonely. Congregate meal sites provide meals in a group setting and keep older adults healthy. These meals offer social engagement and information on health all of which contribute to seniors' overall health and well-being.

74% of seniors in Berkshire County who receive Meals on Wheels live fixed income.

The profile of seniors receiving Meals on Wheels is:

- 75+ years of age
- Live alone
- Are lonely
- Life in rural communities of the county
- Are food and financially insecure

GOALS:

ESBCI's Senior Nutrition Program/Meals on Wheels will maintain its ability to provide hot, nutritious meals with critical wellness checks and social interaction for all Berkshire Seniors who need them. ESBCI will be prepared to meet the increased demand for the program due to the growing number of seniors in Berkshire County and the increase in numbers of seniors (and their families) requesting Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels.

ESBCI will increase its capacity to meet the dietary needs of ALL seniors by offering diet specific meals- Medically Tailored Meals (gluten free, diabetic, vegetarian, and specialized cardiac and renal meals) We will increase the number of Health Assessments for individuals who receive Medically Tailored Meals which include nutritional assessments, education and dietary counseling to ensure the best possible health outcomes. ESBCI's Senior Nutrition Program will increase the number of ethnic meals as part of the menu rotation so that we can provide a sampling of meals that are relevant to the cultural preference of seniors. We will continue to work with Berkshire Health/Berkshire Medical Center in providing Medically Tailored Meals and ESBCI will continue to distribute Farmers' Market Coupons throughout Berkshire County through the Councils on Aging though we have been informed that the program will have fewer coupons than in the past and the face value is reduced to \$25 compared to \$50 last year. A new initiative may be assisting the South County Churches who are working with the largest immigrant population in the County. They are finding that immigrants have stopped going to the food banks for fear of ICE. We in very preliminary discussions of how we may be able to help senior immigrants who are primarily non-English speaking.

Title III Sub Grants

The Title III Sub Grant that ESBCI administers and monitors address Older American Act priorities:

- Community Legal Aid (Berkshire Elder Project) and Berkshire Center for Justice, (Elder Justice Project) both provide free legal services for low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities. Issues they regularly assist seniors with are housing issues including preventing evictions, accessing benefits, senior protective services, scams and credit card debt.
- Berkshire AHEC (Area Health Education Center) provides free support to caregivers through educational programs and support groups.
- Adams COA and the Sheffield COA provide transportation for seniors in their communities
- Berkshire Rainbow Seniors- Provides support, education, advocacy and programming for LGBTQIA+ seniors living in Berkshire County.

GOALS:

These sub grant agencies provide programs and services that address the pressing needs of seniors and caregivers who are most often physically, culturally and socially isolated, live in rural areas and are low income. The Issues of the individuals served are most often exacerbated in that this is a rural community with marginal transportation and services available.

When possible ESBCI will provide additional financial support for legal services provided by Community Legal Aid and Berkshire Center for Justice so they can provide additional free legal assistance to low-income seniors. The needs for legal services for seniors is an increasing critical service often resolving possible evictions and elder protective issues. Each of the sub grants are hindered towards the end of the funding year (September 30th) as they have expended all of their funds on the critical assistance they provide. We have identified a foundation which is able to provide some additional funding for Meals on Wheels and transportation for South County seniors.

Family Caregiver Support

ESBCI's Family Caregiver Support Program is easily accessible to caregivers who are in need of support, assistance, education, advocacy and in some cases assistance in identifying information for respite care options. Family Caregiver Support is dedicated to providing one-on-one, group supports, education and training to caregivers of senior family members, individuals who are disabled and grandparents who are raising grandchildren.

GOALS:

As the population of Berkshire County continues to age there is and will be an increased need for caregiver support. ESBCI will continue and expand the number of support groups held in the three regions of the county-North, South & Central. These on-going meetings and sessions will be provided in addition to one-on-one sessions with individual caregivers. The ultimate goal of the program is for the families and caregivers of seniors and individuals with disabilities to have access to a comprehensive range of services that support older adults and individuals with disabilities to ensure they can maintain their well-being and independence in the community. We will strive to expand the Program to include programs in collaboration with the Christian Center, Northern Berkshire Coalition, VIM (Volunteers in Medicine) and the Dream Center all of which serve minority, immigrant, non-English speaking individuals and low-income populations. This is a sizable challenge in that immigrant families are not trusting. We will utilize outreach

to make caregivers in the community aware of the assistance available to them including an article in Berkshire Senior (circulation 11,000), notice of group meetings on social media and a program on Berkshire Senior TV dedicated to the topic of “caregiving.” Our new video features a whole segment on the Caregivers Program.

Elder Services will continue to support Berkshire Area Health Educational Center (AHEC) as a Title III Grantee that provides caregiver support and training. This year’s topic is “Mental Health First Aid for Older Adults and Caregivers.” We will continue to encourage AHEC to provide their programming virtually as a way to reach a broader geographic audience.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

ESBCI’s Ombudsman Program directly aligns with ACL and AGE priorities by helping maintain the health, dignity and well-being of seniors by enhancing their quality of life. A volunteer based program the Ombudsmen educates long-term residents about their rights and seeks to empower residents to become more active in resolving any concerns they may have. The ombudsman volunteers help reduce the isolation and loneliness experienced by many residents who are living in one of the 13 nursing homes in Berkshire County. An Ombudsman visits their assigned nursing home minimally once a week. This program directly addresses the Needs Assessment priorities of Isolation, Access to Health Care and responding the need of disabled seniors.

GOALS:

The ESBCI Program has been able, post-COVID, to recruit and train new volunteers for the program and will continue the recruiting process. ESBCI has new materials explaining the Program to residents, nursing home staff and families. A laminated card with the name of the resident’s Ombudsman is left in every room. Articles featuring the program and need for volunteers will continue to be included in Berkshire Senior Newspaper.

Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

ESBCI created a new position, Council on Aging Liaison, made possible with ARPA funding. We have continued and will continue this program which is a half-time position who works directly with the COA’S in 32 towns and cities to ensure that the COA’s have the information they need regarding the programs and services of Elder Services. She holds “cluster” meetings with COA representatives for them to share ideas and coordinate efforts. This is most advantageous for the smaller very rural COA’s. The COA Liaison has taken on the role of coordinating all Matter of Balance courses for the community and specifically the COAs. She, herself, has recently become a master trainer, is providing COAs the opportunity to have their own trainers to provide the program in their communities. She will continue to provide trainings and updates and open house meetings with the COA’s.

GOALS:

The major goal for this program is to have Matter of Balance classes being held in all 32 towns and cities of Berkshire County. The program provides the skills and information to make seniors safer in their homes.

Information & Referral

Elder Services' I & R Department is the gateway of information for not only seniors, caregivers and individuals with disabilities but also for the entire Berkshire County community. I & R staff maintains an extensive database which the I & R staff access to provide assistance and information. This information includes contact information on local, statewide and national resources for seniors. Staff are also trained to take preliminary information needed for an individuals to directly receive assistance from ESBCI or open a case for a case manager. The I & R Department also serves as the receptionist for all individuals coming into the offices. Last year Information & Referral assisted 8,361 with the majority of calls looking for information about ESBCI services such as homemaker assistance, Meals on Wheels home delivered meal, companionship, home care, home health services and SHINE.

GOALS:

The goals for ESBCI's Information and Referral Program is to maintain the highest level of service for individuals calling in or coming through our doors. We are proud of the fact that when you call Elder Services you actually get a live person answering the phone every time. This practice will continue. Staff will maintain their training which builds on their expertise. They will also ensure that all information in their database is comprehensive. Each day, the I & R Specialist studies national, state and local news resources and information on policies that are then related to all staff. (Such as information on oil and heat assistance, social security, housing, home delivered meals, vaccinations, food pantries health information, social security, home care services etc.).

Community Volunteer Program

ESBCI's Volunteer Program coordinates a team of volunteers who are able to provide the assistance and services that are so important for seniors especially for isolated seniors in the most rural communities of the County. The services these volunteers provide address many of the needs reported in the 2025 Community Assessment including transporting seniors to and from medical appointments and to other appointments and errands as transportation options in Berkshire County are limited. This transportation is critically important especially for seniors who have no other mode of transportation. Volunteers also provide grocery shopping and will accompany seniors for their weekly grocery shopping. Volunteers also provide companionship and friendly visits which are so important for many of our seniors who are isolated and lonely. A majority of seniors who benefit from these activities are isolated, living alone, living on fixed incomes and live in rural communities which are all consistent with the Older American Act's targeted priority populations.

GOALS:

The overriding goal for Volunteer Services is to increase the number of volunteers. The Manager of Volunteer Services has adopted a multi- pronged approach for the future recruitment of volunteers including attendance at volunteer fairs, attendance at outreach events, advertising the need for volunteers in Berkshire Senior (circulation 11,000) featuring a show on Berkshire Senior TV during April for volunteer month and stories about volunteers featured in Berkshire Senior She has also resurrected volunteer recognition events.

OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

These ESBCI programs and services ensure that senior members of our community live safe and healthy lives, are able to live independently and are able to remain living at home for as long as possible. These programs are critical for our seniors. The programs will continue to meet increased demands for as long as funding is available.

SHINE – Serving the Insurance Needs of Everyone)

The SHINE Program addresses financial stability and access to health insurance and health care for seniors. The Program provides free, unbiased and up-to-date health insurance information through one-on-one counseling and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries of all ages. Access to quality, affordable health insurance and health care are critical issues for seniors and essential to maintaining their health. The SHINE program addresses needs identified by seniors in the Needs Assessment Survey including the ability to remain living independently with access to health care with cost efficient health insurance and financial stability.

GOALS:

The SHINE Program will continue exerted efforts in recruiting additional volunteers to be trained to help meet the ever increasing demand for the Program especially during Medicare open enrollment periods. To assist with the recruitment and training of SHINE volunteers, which is quite involved, the SHINE Program will be piloting a new hybrid training with training modules to be completed on-line followed up with in-person classroom instruction. Outreach events such as “Before You Retirement” presentations will continue to be held virtually on a monthly basis. Informational sessions will be targeted for specific populations such as the Rainbow Seniors. The Program will continue to meet the demand. This past year SHINE volunteers contributed over 2,300 hours helping over 4,300 SHINE consumers.

Money Management

The Money Management Program assists low-income residents 60 years of age and older who need assistance writing checks, balancing their check books and managing their money. Trained insured volunteers visit their senior every month to help them manage their household finances. The Program provides home-based personalized financial management for seniors that promotes financial security, well-being and a better quality of life. Many of the Money Management consumers are isolated, low-income seniors living alone.

GOALS:

The Money Management Program will conduct community outreach to underserved, low-income individuals. The Program addresses the needs of seniors who are financial at risk by stabilizing their financial affairs. Stabilizing their finances also stabilizes their housing and contributes to consumer’s ability to live independently. The Program will recruit volunteers to meet the increased need for the Program’s assistance.

Behavioral Mental Health Outreach for Aging Populations

This Program addresses the need for Mental Health Support of seniors as well as caregivers. The Program addresses the unmet behavioral health needs of older adults. The Program offers free, flexible, person-center interventions of individuals 60 years of age or older. The need for these interventions for older adults in Berkshire County continues to increase dramatically. The current political and social environment only increases the anxiety and feelings of isolation for many seniors. The suicide rate of individuals over the age of 65 in Berkshire County is 14%-twice the rate for the rest of the Commonwealth. The funding from AGE for the Program is secure for the time being.

Clinical Assessment and Case Management

MassHealth designates authority to determine a consumer's clinical eligibility for various MassHealth Programs. ESBCI's registered nurses make the clinical determinations for admission to Berkshire County nursing homes and for the Agency's home and community-based programs. The nurses also conduct in-home assessments for Home Care consumers who need assistance with personal care including bathing, dressing, mobility and eating. The Program, based on person-centered approach, strives to have seniors and disabled adults remain in their homes and avoid nursing facility admissions. The case managers develop a community-based service plan --the goal of which is to ensure individuals receive the services they need to be successful after they are discharged from a nursing home.

Options Counseling

The Options Counseling Program is a free program for seniors and adults with disabilities and caregivers. The Program's goal is to provide unbiased information and support to individuals living in the community when they are making long-term planning decisions regarding such issues as housing, benefits, long-term care, in-home services, and community supports. Options counseling is person-center conversations that explore housing options for seniors including supports they may need to remain in their homes. With the growth of our aging population in Berkshire County, there is a lack of affordable assisted living facilities. This program is critical for seniors as housing options are limited in Berkshire County where there is a lack of housing and rental inventory

In-Home Care Services

Elder Services provides a variety of in-home services designated to enable seniors and disabled adults to remain independent at home. There are times when an individual's ability to perform normal activities of daily living diminishes. Eligibility for Home Care Services is determined by case manager who conduct an assessment at the elder's home. The caseworker and registered nurse will develop a person-centered care-plan which may include chores service, companionship, home delivered meals, homemaking, medication management, and personal care.

GOALS:

The critical goal for the Home Care Programs is the to operate this program with the shortfall in the State budget that threatens these vital home care services for e seniors., These services are essential for helping older adults live independently and safely in their home while enhancing their quality of life and reducing healthcare costs.

The \$50 million state deficit for this program has mandated programmatic changes by AGE. The first stage of the required changes is a cap imposed on the number of individuals we can enroll in the Enhanced

Community Options Program (ECOP) which is for individuals who qualify for nursing home care but can be provide in-home supports and services so they can remain home.

AGENCY GENERATED FUNDS

ESBCI has been successful in generating community financial support for the following **non-formula grant programs**:

SHINE – Earmarked State funding

Greylock Federal Credit Union

The Feigenbaum Foundation

Central Berkshire Fund

City of Pittsfield – Pittsfield only CDBG Funds

Behavioral Health Outreach for Aging Populations – Earmarked State Funding

Supportive Housing – State Senior Housing Grant

Fallon Navicare – Fallon Health Care funding

Berkshire County's Aging and Disability Resource Consortium – State Grant

TRANSPORTION for South County – The Everett Fund

MEALS ON WHEELS – The Everett Fund—South County Only

Central Berkshire Fund- North County Only

City of Pittsfield CDBG Funds- Pittsfield Only

Ruth M. Boraski Memorial Fund

Addition community support from programing comes from sources that are unrestricted

- Northern Berkshire United Way

- Williamstown Community Chest

- Katherine & Winthrop Crane Foundation

- The Crane Foundation

OUTREACH

Elder Services will continue to participate in community outreach activities including:

- Berkshire Pride Festival
- Juneteenth Community Day
- Adams Street Fair
- Christian Center Community Day
- BCAC Community Day
- Berkshire Immigrant Center and Volunteers in Medicine Community Day
- Festival Latino
- Best of the Berkshires
- City of Pittsfield Housing Resource Fair
- Queer Men of the Berkshires Evening Outreach Events
- Shakespeare & Company Community Day