

# ENERGY SERVICES

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



## Message from the CEO

I am pleased and proud to present Opportunities for Otsego Annual Report for the period October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021. Our entire nation has been functioning in unprecedented times as we are approaching the two-year mark of the Coronavirus Pandemic. This report highlights some of the many accomplishments we've attained in assisting and helping the many low-income individuals and families in the care of our programs and services.

Opportunities for Otsego overcame many financial challenges due to revenue losses at the federal, state and local levels of governments during this period. These challenges were exacerbated by delays in contracts and reimbursements related to the pandemic. We overcame these challenges with PPE loans and expanding lines of credit and stayed the course until things settled down. Now we are slowly getting things back to normal and ended the year with a healthy balance sheet for the reporting period.

While this report highlights Opportunities for Otsego accomplishments, I do like to take the opportunity to look at the year ahead. Opportunities for Otsego is embarking on a yearlong strategic planning process in four phases. The first phase will be providing trauma informed care for our employees who had their own struggles and challenges assisting Opportunities for Otsego clients as well as dealing with their own challenges at home. The second phase will be to present our Community Needs Assessment data to community partners, organizations and local public officials to gain insights and formulate community plans based on identified needs. The third phase,

and in many ways most important, is developing a social justice plan that acknowledges race and inequities in our communities and plans to reach out to underserved minority and disenfranchised communities in Otsego County. The fourth phase will be to bring it all together and share progress with the community and strengthen the great work the community has done to alleviate poverty despite no clear national or state collective policies.

I'd like to close by thanking the Opportunities for Otsego board of directors for the foresight and guidance that's been provided to the entire organization and me personally. Finally, I would like to thank the awesome employees of Opportunities for Otsego. The work that they pulled off in the last year and a half, in the worst of circumstances is simply remarkable.



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the poverty rate across the nation and Otsego County was on downward trend. The shuttering of businesses, schools, and community supports in an effort to "stop the spread" exacerbated challenges faced by low-income households trying to make ends meet and thrust families, who were once financial stable, into a state of crisis.

By design, Community Action Agencies implement programs, services, and activities to address community conditions. In response to COVID-19, Opportunities for Otsego made operational adjustments to ensure the needs of individuals and families could still be met.

Facility modifications such as Plexiglas dividers, extra cleaning protocols, and access to PPE were top priority to ensure continuity of essential agency services and for energy services crews to resume work during Phase I reopening. For staff unable to work from home, office space was reconfigured to increase distance between work spaces and schedules were staggered to limit exposure.

Investments in technology allowed programs and clients to remain connected. Early childhood staff



utilized Zoom and Facetime to maintain visiting schedules, facilitate parent groups and socializations, and offer Head Start children a classroom experience. WIC coordinated remote appointments, accepted electronic submission of required documents, and provided virtual, phone, and text-based breastfeeding support. The Violence Intervention Program held virtual counseling sessions, support groups, and assisted victims in filing court petitions and obtaining protection orders through the Unified Court System online platform. Opportunities for Otsego utilized social media and its website to share resources relevant to COVID-19 such as testing, vaccinations, eviction moratorium updates, and changes to food stamp eligibility.

Recognizing barriers to connectivity, accommodations were made for those unable to connect virtually including: regular phone calls to offer support; outdoor, in-person visits and group events as weather and COVID protocols permitted. Employees dropped off and picked up weekly lessons plans, Farmers' Market Coupons, and other essential resources. In partnership with SUNY Oneonta, Office for the Aging, and Bassett Healthcare, Opportunities for Otsego conducted outreach to hard-to-reach families and individuals on COVID-19 vaccinations.

To address economic instability exacerbated by COVID-19, Opportunities for Otsego helped meet basic needs. Through agency programs, families received food deliveries, grocery store gift cards, diapers, wipes and formula. Staff also provided gas cards, transportation vouchers, and coordinated rides for food, prescriptions, and other medical needs. Head Start distributed backpacks filled with school supplies and partnered with the YMCA for summer services to children transitioning to kindergarten. Furthermore, in partnership with CDO Workforce and the New York State Weatherization Directors Association, Opportunities for Otsego began offering a construction/energy conservation pathway training program for unemployed and underemployed for 18 to 24 year olds seeking employment training.

Opportunities for Otsego supported 3,021 individuals from 10/2020 to 09/2021. Here are specific client demographics:

- Gender: Female (56%); Male (44%)
- Age: Under 5 (28%); 6-17 (19%); 18-24 (8%); 25-54 (39%); 55+ (6%)
- Race: White (87%); Multi/Biracial (7%); Black or African American (3%); Other (3%)
- Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino origin (8%)
- Household Income: Up to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (73%); 101-200% of Federal Poverty Level (20%); Over 200% of Federal Poverty Level (7%)
- Housing Status: Rent (45%); Own (29%); Homeless (19%); Other arrangement (23%)

Client outcomes:

- 79 homeless households were provided emergency housing through OFO's homeless and domestic violence shelters.
- 23 homeless attained permanent housing.
- 216 victims of interpersonal violence had their safety assured by receiving emergency legal assistance.
- 93 households had lower energy costs, increased disposable income and improved health as a result of installation of energy efficiency and weatherization measures.
- 264 low-income children were gifted new winter coats.
- 491 caregivers exhibited improved parenting skills and family functioning.
- 1,143 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers exhibited positive growth and development through access to healthy food and nutrition education.
- 195 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers were up-to-date on recommended medical screenings, dental care, and immunizations.
- 60 preschoolers were deemed developmental ready to begin kindergarten after participation in Head Start and UPK.



## Make a Difference

Giving to Opportunities for Otsego is an investment in our community. Each gift, large or small, offers hope and opportunity to our friends and neighbors in need. Your gift helps repair homes and reduce home heating costs; provides quality early childhood education; promotes healthy families through supplemental nutrition and parent education; and shelters our neighbors during their times of greatest need.

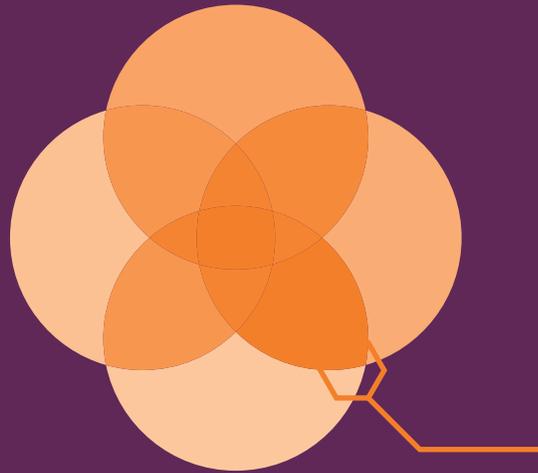
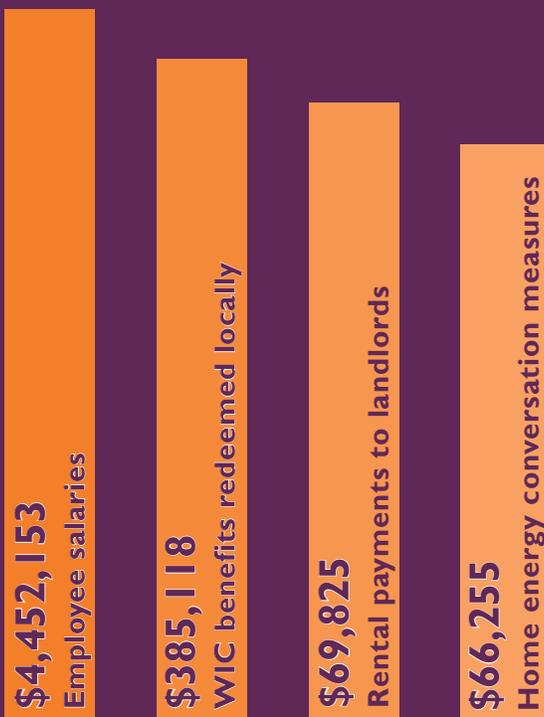
Learn how you can make a difference in our community at [www.ofoinc.org/donate](http://www.ofoinc.org/donate)

During FY2021, Opportunities for Otsego was awarded additional funding to enhance responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Funds from the CARES Act ensured uninterrupted services to families and helped implement strategies to meet basic needs and address the social, emotional, and overall well-being of individuals and families. Outcomes realized under CARES:

- 130 households were provided support, assistance, and referrals for matters directly related to COVID-19.
- 51 households had their transportation, home utility, and food security needs met.
- 42 individuals gained access to mental health care.
- 10 households were counseled on their housing rights and referred to legal services.
- 14 adults were provided career counseling and assisted with a job search.
- 10 unemployed adults earned certification for careers in construction, weatherization and home energy conservation field.

## Economic Impact

During FY2021, Opportunities for Otsego reinvested **\$4,973,351** into the local community.



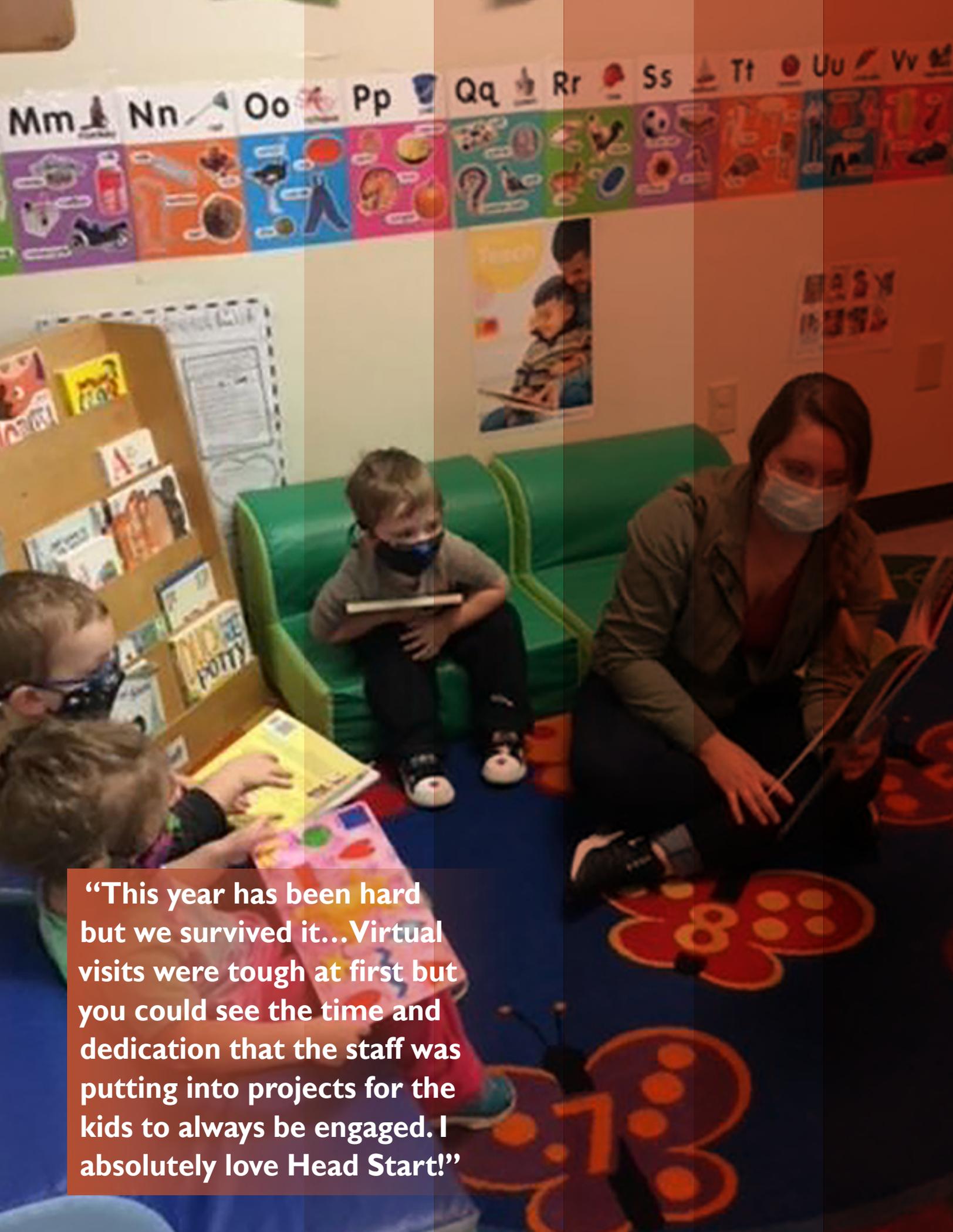
## Statement of Activities

REVENUE	
Contract and Grants	6,538,379
WIC Food Instruments	385,118
Program Service Fees	324,466
Program Revenue	263,747
Contributions	82,810
In-Kind Contributions	458,635
Other Revenue	79,288
Interest Income	6,117
Net Depreciation	103,967
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 8,242,527</b>

EXPENSES	
Child & Family Services	5,000,729
Crisis Intervention Services	1,441,412
Energy Services	490,430
Other Human Services	497,864
Management & General	869,788
Fundraising	2,974
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$8,303,197</b>

Change in Net Assets	(60,670)
Net Assets: BOY	1,857,023
Net Assets: EOY	1,796,353

Opportunities for Otsego received an unqualified opinion from its independent auditors, EFPR Group, on its financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. The review of the 2020 financial statement was the 17th consecutive year in which external auditors found no audit findings regarding the prior year financial statements.



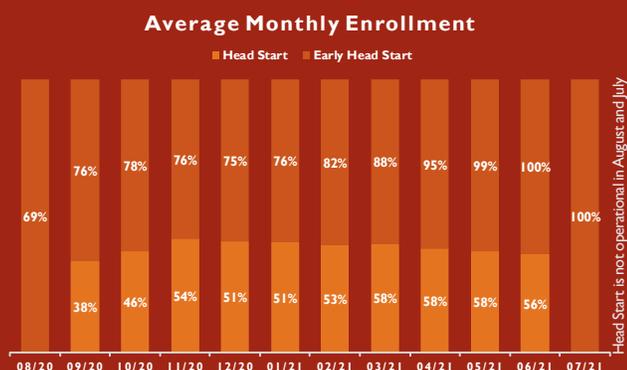
**“This year has been hard but we survived it...Virtual visits were tough at first but you could see the time and dedication that the staff was putting into projects for the kids to always be engaged. I absolutely love Head Start!”**

## Pregnancy to Preschool

Head Start has been promoting family health and well-being while preparing young children for kindergarten for over 50 years. Early Head Start supports families from pregnancy until a child's third birthday through home-based services and a toddler classroom in Oneonta. Head Start is a center-based program for children ages 3–5. Head Start operates 12 classrooms in eight communities throughout Otsego County.

## Enrollment

During the 2020-2021 program year, 141 children from 109 families were served through Early Head Start and 137 children from 130 families were served through Head Start. During operational months, the average Early Head Start enrollment was 85% and the average Head Start enrollment was 52%. The percentage of eligible children served was 87% (EHS) and 83% (HS).



## Parent Involvement

The COVID-19 pandemic required Head Start to offer flexible program options to best meet the health and safety needs of children, families, and staff. When in-person services were not possible, virtual and home visiting services were offered to support children's development of skills and parent's engagement in their child's education.

Some other examples of ways Opportunities for Otsego's Head Start program regularly promotes parent involvement include: monthly parent groups and activity-based socializations; volunteer opportunities in the classroom, on field trips, and during special program events; parent-teacher conferences; annual Dads Take Your Child

To School Day; participation on Policy Council, the governing body of the Head Start program; and utilization of the Devereux Your Journey Together curriculum, that builds on parents' knowledge and skills to support both parent and child resiliency to promote positive family outcomes.

## Health Services

To ensure children are healthy and ready to learn, Head Start conducts and coordinates access to health and developmental screenings and links enrolled children and prenatal mothers to medical, dental, and mental health services. Through the support of the program, 66% of Early Head Start and 85% of Head Start children received a medical exam within the program year and 20% of Early Head Start and 45% of Head Start children received a dental exam.

## Kindergarten Preparation

Opportunities for Otsego's Early Head Start and Head Start program formulated school-readiness goals that align with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, New York State Standards for the Pre-Kindergarten Common Core, and New York State Early Learning Guidelines. Activities help prepare children from birth to age five for Kindergarten by teaching foundational skills and encourage parents to be an active participant in their child's education. Curriculum and assessment tools utilized by these programs - *Partners for a Healthy Baby*, *The Creative Curriculum series*, and *Teaching Strategies GOLD* - further align with New York State and national standards to promote growth over a continuum of learning that spans birth through second grade.

During 2019-2020 year, Opportunities for Otsego piloted *Bridges to Kindergarten*. This initiative pairs newly graduated Head Start children and families with a family partner to support the transition into kindergarten by helping families develop relationships with the school and facilitating linkages to community resources. *Bridges to Kindergarten* continued into the 2020-2021 year, serving seven Head Start children in the Oneonta School District.

The last federal review conducted by the Office of Head Start was in 05/2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this monitoring event was conducted remotely and involved review of program documents and interviews with applicable staff. Findings from the Focus Area One review found no opportunities for continuous improvement, areas of concern, areas of noncompliance, or deficiencies in the areas of education and child development, health, and family and community engagement services; fiscal infrastructure and capacity; program governance and accountability; and was found to be meeting the identified needs of the community.

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