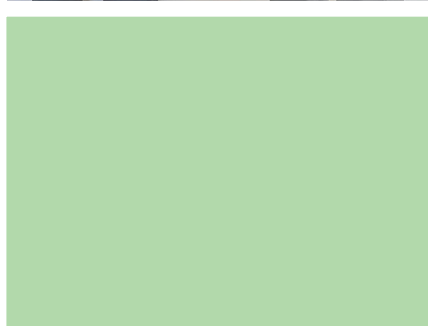
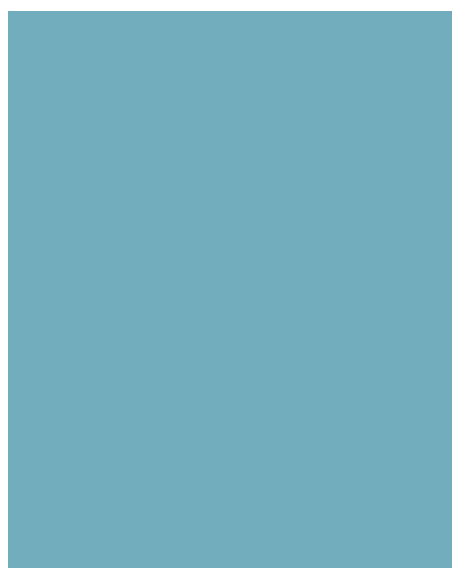


2023

Annual Report



Message from the CEO

On behalf of its board of directors and our dedicated employees, I am happy to present the Opportunities for Otsego Annual Report. This report highlights some of the many accomplishments we've achieved by helping low-income individuals and families in the care of our organization.

We are once again pleased and proud to achieve a perfect independent audit of our financial activities. Fiduciary responsibilities are the backbone of Opportunities for Otsego operations. Opportunities for Otsego has strong financial controls and separation of financial duties to assure that systems function within the requirements of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

We are also very pleased to report that our employee retention rates are at pre-pandemic levels. Opportunities for Otsego has streamlined its employment application process to make it as simple as possible to submit applications for employment.

The Emergency Housing Assistance Program is very pleased to have received a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant to provide rapid rehousing assistance to unhoused individuals grappling with the costs of getting started in permanent housing situations.

The Violence Intervention Program created a soft interview room where police departments can interview victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in a comfortable space as they discuss their trauma.

The board of directors approved a strategic plan that centers around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The purpose of this approach is to assure that Opportunities for Otsego reaches people in all populations within our community whether it be employment or connection to services.

Early in my career, someone told me that the problems that we face today are miniscule to the problems we'll face tomorrow. We are facing overwhelming problems as resources for rural communities continue to dwindle. But I am always optimistic by the dedication and hard work of the staff here at Opportunities for Otsego to rise to the challenge.



Dan Maskin
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Maskin', written in a cursive style.

Head Start children and classroom staff celebrated Community Action Month during the month of May by coloring “Huggy Hearts”; the official logo of the National Community Action Partnership.



In February 2023, OFO emergency housing staff partnered with the City of Oneonta Police Department and other community groups to provide warm blankets to unsheltered persons encountered during the annual HUD Point-in-Time count of homeless.



Building Healthy Families hosted their annual family picnic at Wilber Park in Oneonta. Family Support Specialists celebrated family accomplishments and presented children moving on to Head Start and Kindergarten with “graduation” certificates and a gift.



Violence Intervention Program staff joined fellow victim advocates at the New York State Capital for the 2023 Domestic Violence Day of Action to petition for increased investments for emergency shelter and critical wrap-around support services.





Annual Achievements

Over the period 10/2022 through 09/2023, Opportunities for Otsego supported 3,167 individuals from 1,119 households scattered across Otsego County.

Opportunities for Otsego is one of over 1,000 Community Action Agencies established nationwide under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty. Community Action Agencies are dedicated to changing lives and improving communities by addressing the causes and conditions of poverty and creating opportunities for low-income persons. Opportunities for Otsego's mission is

***To be the leader in
developing innovative
solutions that promote
healthy lives, thriving
families, and caring
communities***

Since 1966, Opportunities for Otsego has offered support and resources to alleviate poverty, foster economic stability and advance social justice. From homelessness to domestic violence, from sexual assault to home energy improvements, from early childhood education to supplemental nutrition, Opportunities for Otsego remains steadfast in supporting our friends and neighbors struggling to meet their day-to-day needs.

Over the period 10/2022 through 09/2023, Opportunities for Otsego supported 3,167 individuals from 1,119 households across rural Otsego County. Demographics of persons and household benefitting from agency programs is as follows.

Household Demographics

- Household Type: Two-Parent (33.9%); Single Person (26.4%); Single-Parent (26.8%); Two-Adults, No Children (7.6%); Multi-generational (3.9%); Other (1.4%)
- Housing Status: Rent (40.8%); Own (34.0%); Homeless (20.7%); Other arrangement (4.5%)

- Household Income: Up to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (80.1%); 101-200% of Federal Poverty Level (14.3%); Over 200% of Federal Poverty Level (5.6%)
- Source of Income: Employment Only (13.9%); Employment and Other Sources (31.8%); Other Income and Non-Cash Benefits (41.2%); No Income (13.1%)

Individual Demographics

- Gender: Female (54.3%); Male (45.5%); Non-binary (0.2%)
- Age: Under 5 (23.8%); 6-17 (20.1%); 18-24 (9.0%); 25-54 (38.6%); 55-59 (2.4%); 60+ (6.1%)
- Race: White (86.8%); Multi/Biracial (6.2%); Black/African American (3.5%); Asian (1.4%); Other (2.1%)
- Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino (7.1%)
- Adult Education Level: Less than High School Diploma (14.4%); High School Diploma/HSE (50.8%); Some Post-Secondary (14.5%); Two-Year Degree+ (20.3%)
- Veteran/Active Military: 1.6%
- Self-Identified Disability: 7.4%
- No Health Insurance: 8.8%

Employee Demographics

As part of Opportunities for Otsego DEI strategic initiatives, the agency has made concerted efforts to ensure staff that support the community reflect those we serve. Employee demographics are as follows.

- Gender: Female (88.2%); Male (11.8%)
- Race: White (89.7%); Hispanic/Latino (5.2%); Black/African American (4.4%); Multi/Biracial (0.7%)

Client Achievements

Programs under the umbrella of Opportunities for Otsego include Bridges to Kindergarten, Building Healthy Families, Early Head Start, Emergency Housing, Energy Opportunities, Head Start, Universal Pre-Kindergarten, Violence Intervention Program, Weatherization, Wheels to Work, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Through these programs, families and individuals realized the following outcomes:

- Through the support of Bridges to Kindergarten, eight elementary-age children demonstrated improved approaches to learning and attention skills.
- Forty-three Homeless households were provided safe, temporary housing at the agency homeless and domestic violence shelters.
- Twenty-seven previously homeless households secured affordable, permanent housing.
- The Violence Intervention Program assured the safety of 232 victims of crime.
- Warm winter coats were gifted to 305 low-income children.

- 225 Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers were up-to-date on recommended well child visits and obtained recommended immunizations, and dental care.
- 66 Preschoolers were deemed developmentally ready to begin kindergarten after participation in Head Start and UPK.
- 461 Caregivers exhibited improved parenting skills and family functioning.
- 87 Low-income households had reduced energy costs, increased disposable income and improved health as a result of energy efficiency and weatherization measures.
- 1,243 children and adults had improved physical health through access to adequate nutrition.

Help Us Make a Difference

Giving to Opportunities for Otsego is an investment in our community. Gifts - large and small - offer hope and opportunity to our friends and neighbors struggling to make ends meet. Visit us online to donate to our mission and learn how you can make a difference.



“I was thinking about you the other day because I was realizing how much I’ve grown and changed...I just wanted to say thank you. I would still be repeating the same patterns if it hadn’t been for your great advice...Positive change is possible with a strong foundation and good support system. Keep up the good work!”

Head Start

Opportunities for Otsego's Head Start program has been promoting family health and well-being while preparing young children for kindergarten for over 55 years.

Pregnancy to Preschool

Early Head Start supports families from pregnancy until a child's third birthday through home-based programming and a toddler classroom in Oneonta. Head Start offers a center-based program for children ages 3–5 through eleven classrooms in seven communities throughout Otsego County.

Enrollment

Opportunities for Otsego supports 100 children through Early Head Start and 206 preschoolers through Head Start. During the 2022-23 program year, 124 children and pregnant women from 92 families were served through Early Head Start and 157 children from 149 families were served through Head Start. During operational months, the average Early Head Start enrollment was 80% and the average Head Start enrollment was 62%. The percentage of eligible children served was 80% through Early Head Start and 82% through Head Start.

Monthly Program Enrollment

Month	Early Head Start	Head Start
August	67% (67/100)	**
September	72% (72/100)	54% (111/206)
October	75% (75/100)	60% (124/206)
November	78% (78/100)	62% (127/206)
December	77% (77/100)	61% (126/206)
January	77% (77/100)	61% (125/206)
February	81% (81/100)	59% (122/206)
March	85% (85/100)	65% (134/206)
April	85% (85/100)	65% (134/206)
May	90% (90/100)	67% (137/206)
June	88% (88/100)	65% (133/206)
July	88% (88/100)	**

** Head Start is not operational during August and July **

Parent Involvement

Opportunities for Otsego's Head Start program regularly promotes parent involvement through:

- Monthly parent groups and activity-based socializations
- Volunteer opportunities in the classroom, on field trips, and during special program events
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Participation on Policy Council, the governing body of the Head Start program

Additionally, surveys are distributed annually to all enrolled families to gauge satisfaction with the program and gather parent feedback. Our program also offers a parenting curriculum, Devereux's Your Journey Together, to help support parents in their role by building on knowledge and skills to support both parent and child resiliency to promote positive family outcomes.

Health and Development

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, 52% of Early Head Start and 82% of Head Start children received a medical exam within the program year; 30% of Early Head Start and 45% of Head Start children received a dental exam; and 100% of both Head Start and Early Head Start staff received assistance from the Mental Health Coordinator through observation and consultation.



“My child is showing a lot of growth at home that we attribute to the program.”

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 online assessment) further align with New York State and national standards to promote growth over a continuum of learning that spans birth through second grade.

“Bridges to Kindergarten” continued into the 2022-2023 program year. This initiative paired eight newly graduated Head Start families enrolled in the Oneonta City School District with a community advocate to help foster relationships with the public school and offer linkages to community resources.

The Office of Head Start scheduled its most recent federal review with Opportunities for Otsego during the Fall of 2023 with results anticipated in early 2024. The last federal review was in 05/2021. Findings from that 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; fiscal infrastructure and capacity; program governance and accountability; and was found to be meeting the identified needs of the community.

Financial Report

Opportunities for Otsego received an unqualified opinion from independent auditors from EFPR Group on its financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023. This review marked the nineteenth consecutive year in which external auditors found no audit findings regarding the prior year financial statements.

During FY2023, Opportunities for Otsego successfully secured additional federal and state grant funding to expand and enhance programming to benefit the community:

- In February 2023, representatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development visited Opportunities for Otsego to announce a historic funding award totaling \$716,456. Through this special funding opportunity, Opportunities for Otsego will collaborate with community providers to address rural homelessness and provide financial assistance, intensive case management, and innovative strategies to rapidly rehouse homeless persons.
- As part of its continuation funding grant, the Violence Intervention Program requested and was awarded an additional \$166,115 from the New York State Office of Victims Services to create and manage a soft interview room. This trauma-informed space was designed under the guidance of Project Beloved and will be utilized in partnership with local law enforcement to interview adult victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and other gender-based crimes.





Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year 2023

Revenue

Contracts and Grants	7,119,744
WIC Food Instruments	482,558
Program Service Fees	543,233
Program Revenue	226,125
Contributions	75,260
In-Kind Contributions	335,915
Other Revenue	89
Interest Income	6,905
Net Depreciation	(22,195)
Total Revenue	8,767,634

Expenses

Child & Family Services	5,404,039
Crisis Intervention Services	1,261,026
Energy Services	881,046
Other Human Services	443,765
Management & General	918,750
Fundraising	2,906
Total Expenses	8,901,532

Net Change in Assets	(133,898)
Net Assets: Beginning of Year	1,743,598
Net Assets: End of Year	1,609,700

During Fiscal Year 2023, Opportunities for Otsego invested \$5,590,890 back into the local community:

- \$4,520,986 in employee wages.
- \$482,558 in WIC food benefits redeemed at local grocery stores and Farmers Markets.
- \$374,696 in home energy conservation measures and health and safety improvements completed on private homes and multi-unit housing complexes.
- \$101,005 in rental subsidies and security deposits paid to local landlords to ensure safe, stable housing for lower-income persons.
- \$111,645 paid to local vendors to assist clients with educational expenses and help in meeting their basic needs (e.g. food, clothing, transportation).

Economic Impact

\$5,590,890

The federal Head Start Act requires local programs to provide an annual report to the public, including a proposed budget for the fiscal year. Opportunities for Otsego's Head Start program anticipates an operating budget of \$4,691,836 for FY2024, of which 77% has been allocated for personnel and 23% for other operating expenses. In addition, Head Start must procure \$1,087,701 in In-Kind donations to satisfy federal matching fund requirements.



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Board of Directors

Officers: Lisa Samols (President); Melinda Murdock (Vice-president); Dr. Benjamin Friedell (Secretary); David Merzig (Treasurer). Members At Large: Elizabeth Blasco; Douglas Brenner; Daniel Butterman; Laura Carpenter; Fanny Clements; Dr. Alan Donovan; Tim Parsons; Susan Szczepanski; Lorrie Wolverton

Per federal statute, Opportunities for Otsego Board of Directors is composed of one-third representatives of the low-income community; one-third from the private sector; and one-third elected public officials or designee.