

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



The leader in developing innovative solutions that promote healthy lives, thriving families, and caring communities.

MESSAGE FROM CEO



Each year, Opportunities for Otsego uses its annual report as a time to reflect on the successes and challenges of the previous year. Like many across the nation and the globe, life as we knew it came to a halt in March 2020. Over the past months there have been long moments of tedium and brief moments of great intensity. All the while, Opportunities for Otsego has been operating in a holding pattern and waiting for word that we can return to a business-as-usual format.

Opportunities for Otsego has been a lifeline for tens of thousands of families across Otsego County since 1966. However, operating the agency and providing continuity of services in the wake of a pandemic has proven difficult. As time has passed, it has become clear that Opportunities for Otsego must move out of the holding pattern and into a new paradigm for carrying out its mission.

The entire Opportunities for Otsego team, from direct line staff to management to board members, have achieved impossible things under unimaginable circumstances. Their jobs were hard before, but despite unpredictable challenges, they continue to advocate and provide hope and opportunity to working people and low-income families.

Opportunities for Otsego has continued to expand and enhance community partnerships. I am proud to have been re-elected to the New York State Community Action Board of Directors and continue my service on the Community Services Board Sub Committee on Mental Health. Key staff have also fortified community partnerships through 2020 Census outreach efforts, the Mohawk Valley Behavioral Health Collaborative on trauma-informed care, the New York State Head Start Association, and the new Otsego County Integrated Domestic Violence Court.

As we move into 2021, I look forward to focusing on issues of diversity, race, and equity, and helping our community recover from the social, emotional, and financial impacts of COVID-19.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Maskin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dan Maskin, CEO

2019-2020 Board of Directors

Officers: Sita Fey, President; Melinda Murdock, Vice President; Dr. Benjamin Friedell, Secretary; David Merzig, Treasurer

Members at Large: Katie Böttger; Daniel Buttermann; Fanny Clements; Alan Donovan; Catarina Ferreira; Lynn Kent; Tim Parsons; Tamie Reed; Lisa Samols; Erin Seeley; Andrew Stammel; Ana Vendemmia; Lorrie Wolverton

YEAR IN REVIEW

When Opportunities for Otsego was incorporated in 1966, poverty predominately impacted children, minorities, and single mothers; however, today's poverty impacts persons of all ages, genders, and social and racial groups. Many families accessing support from Opportunities for Otsego are employed and struggling to make ends meet. Others are stricken with sudden hardships - such as skyrocketing housing costs, unreliable transportation, medical debt, the loss of a household member, and as of recently, COVID-19 - and need temporary support to get back on their feet. From October 2019 to September 2020, Opportunities for Otsego provided services to 2,036 individuals from 1,137 households living in all zip codes in Otsego County.



Client Demographics

- Gender: Female (66%); Male (34%)
- Age: Under five years old (29%); ages 6-17 (7%); ages 18-24 (10%); ages 25-44 (44%); ages 45-54 (5%); ages 55+ (5%)
- Race: White/Caucasian (88%); Multi-Race (6%); Black/African American (3%); Other (3%)
- Ethnicity: Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origins (7%)
- Education of Adults Age 25 and Older: Grade 8-12/ Non-Graduate (15%); High School Graduate/GED (45%); Some Post-Secondary (18%); Two- or Four-Year College Graduate (19%); Graduate of Other Post-Secondary (3%)
- Family Type: Two Parent Household (42%); Single Parent Female/Male (30%); Single Person (16%); Two Adults No Children (6%); Multigenerational Household (5%); and Other (1%)
- Level of Family Income: Up to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (77%); 101-200% of the Federal Poverty Level (19%); Over 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (4%)
- Source of Family Income: Employment Only (14%); Employment and Other Sources (38%); No Income/ Non-Cash Benefits Only (27%); Other (21%)
- Housing: Own (26%); Rent (50%); Homeless (18%); Other (6%)



New Initiatives

Opportunities for Otsego's Energy Services Department will be providing Weatherization services in neighboring Chenango County.

In collaboration with the local Workforce Investment Board and the New York State Weatherization Directors Association, displaced workers will have access to training and certification in the fields of building construction and energy conservation.

Working with the county, municipalities, and numerous community-based organizations, Opportunities for Otsego spearheaded the local 2020 Census Complete Count Committee and coordinated community outreach efforts to reach historically undercounted groups.



Operations

Through investments in technology, Opportunities for Otsego remained connected to the community during mandated COVID-19 closures:

- Building Healthy Families, Early Head Start, and Head Start offered virtual home visiting and educational programs to ensure uninterrupted delivery of services and supports to children & families.
- VIP assisted victims in obtaining legal protections and proceeded with scheduled Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and community trainings for law enforcement.
- WIC enrolled new families and issued benefits by facilitating electronic submission of required documentation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In the spirit of Community Action, Opportunities for Otsego offers a variety of services and programs that strive to eliminate poverty, improve the conditions in which people live, and help strengthening support networks. Current programs under the umbrella of Opportunities for Otsego include Bridges to Kindergarten, Building Healthy Families, The Children's Center, Early Head Start, Emergency Housing, Energy Opportunities, Head Start, Homebuyer Education and Counseling, Universal Pre-Kindergarten, the Violence Intervention Program, Weatherization, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Outcomes achieved through these programs include:



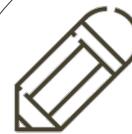
Health & Wellness

271 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers were up to date on age-appropriate immunizations, medical, and dental care through access to ongoing case management and family support services.

1,037 pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers had positive gains in their health and development through access to adequate nutrition.

235 victims of interpersonal violence had their safety assured by obtaining emergency legal assistance, referrals to pro bono attorney services, and emergency shelter.

426 low-income children had improved health, school attendance, and a boost in self-esteem through receiving a new winter coat.



Education

254 children demonstrated school-readiness skills at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 Head Start program year.

103 four-year-old children who participated in Head Start and Universal Pre-Kindergarten were deemed developmentally ready to enter Kindergarten.

11 elementary school age children exhibited improved learning and attention skills as a result of individualized education and family support services.



Housing

140 homeless households were provided safe, temporary housing through the Emergency Housing and Violence Intervention Program 24-hour staffed emergency shelters.

44 homeless households secured safe, affordable housing through the support & financial assistance offered by the Emergency Housing Assistance Program & domestic violence Transitional Housing program.

73 housing units had improved energy efficiency & a reduction in home heating and cooling costs through construction, weatherization, and home rehabilitation and improvement projects.

11 current and prospective homeowners participated in homebuyer education and financial counseling so they may maintain affordable housing and realize the dream of homeownership.



Family

In part to ongoing home visiting, case management, and referrals to community support services, 549 caregivers of preschool children exhibited an increased sensitivity and responsiveness to their children and improved household management skills.

33 parents, through access to free child care, addressed their legal needs and obtained information and referrals to supportive community services.

FINANCIAL REPORT

During FY2020, Opportunities for Otsego was awarded new funding contracts that enhanced collaboration with community partners and expanded reach to individuals in need. Funds from the New York Community Trust supported 2020 Census outreach to underrepresented groups throughout Otsego County and CARES Act funding helped to implement strategies which address the social, emotional, and financial well-being of individuals and families impacted by COVID-19.

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



Statement of Activities: FY20

Revenue	
Contract and Grants	6,958,107
WIC Food Instruments	466,156
Program Service Fees	639,930
Program Revenue	372,232
Contributions	139,148
In-Kind Contributions	934,364
Other Revenue	714
Interest Income	6,463
Net Depreciation	(37,442)
Total Revenue	\$9,479,672
Expenses	
Child & Family Development	5,688,238
Crisis Intervention Services	1,473,132
Energy Services	686,444
Other Human Services	651,263
Management & General	833,093
Fundraising	5,828
Total Expenses	\$9,337,998
Change in Net Assets	141,674
Net Assets: Beginning of Year	1,715,349
Net Assets: End of Year	1,857,023

The federal Head Start Act and the Community Services Block Grant require local programs to provide an annual report to the public, including a proposed budget for the fiscal year. Opportunities for Otsego, Head Start program anticipates an operating budget of \$4,186,386 for FY2021, of which 75% has been allocated for personnel and 25% for other operating expenses. In addition, Head Start must procure \$1,046,596 in in-kind donations to satisfy federal matching fund requirements.



Economic Impact

In addition to promoting healthy lives and thriving families, Opportunities for Otsego makes a positive economic impact. **During FY2020 the agency reinvested \$5,320,139 into the local economy:**

- Employee salaries: \$4,580,459
- WIC benefits redeemed at local stores: \$466,156
- Rental payments made to area landlords: \$153,952
- Completed home energy improvement measures and installation of heating equipment and Energy Star appliances: \$119,572



Make a Difference

Giving to Opportunities for Otsego is an investment in our community. Each gift, large or small, provides opportunities for our friends and neighbors in need. Your gift helps repair homes and reduce heating costs for low income households; 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:

www.ofoinc.org/donate

HEAD START



For over 50 years, Head Start programs have been preparing young children to succeed in school and in life beyond school. To achieve this, Head Start delivers services to children and families in the core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents as partners every step of the way.

Beginning prenatally, Early Head Start provides comprehensive child development and family support services. The goals of Early Head Start are to promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers; support parents in their role as primary caregivers and teachers of their children; and connect families to community resources so they may meet personal goals and achieve self-sufficiency across a wide variety of domains.

Head Start is a center-based preschool program that promotes school readiness of children under five years old. Head Start helps children develop the early reading, math, and social skills needed to be successful in school and supports families by building positive parent-child relationships, family well-being, and connections to peers and the community. Head Start center-based services are offered in eight communities throughout Otsego County.

Program Monitoring

The last federal review conducted by the Office of Head Start was in 12/2017. Per the Focus Area Two Monitoring and Classroom Assessment Scoring System Reviews, Opportunities for Otsego’s Head Start program met the requirements of all applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations and policy requirements and was qualified as a low risk auditee through the program financial audit process. Head Start is scheduled for a Focus Area One Monitoring Review during the 2020-2021 program year.

Health & Wellness

Otsego County is deemed a “Medically Underserved Area” due to the shortage of primary medical providers. The lack of providers coupled with community barriers challenge low-income families from accessing preventive health care. Early Head Start and Head Start promote positive health outcomes by conducting and coordinating health and development screenings and linking enrolled children and prenatal mothers to medical, dental, and mental health services. To facilitate access, family partners coordinate and, as needed, provide transportation for families to medical providers so they may obtain recommended medical and dental care. Through the support of the program, 88% of Early Head Start and 100% of Head Start children received a medical exam within the program year and 48% of Early Head Start and 58% of Head Start children received a dental exam.



Enrollment

During the 2019-2020 program year, 131 children from 111 families were served through Early Head Start and 193 children from 183 families were served through Head Start. During operational months, the average Early Head Start enrollment was 94% and the average Head Start enrollment was 80%. The percentage of eligible children served was 87% (EHS) and 98% (HS).

Average Monthly Enrollment

	EHS	HS
08/2019*	85%	---
09/2019	99%	73%
10/2019	97%	77%
11/2019	100%	76%
12/2019	99%	75%
01/2020	100%	83%
02/2020	98%	85%
03/2020	93%	83%
04/2020	86%	83%
05/2020	88%	83%
06/2020	92%	83%
07/2020*	93%	---

* Head Start is not in session during these months

Parent Involvement

Head Start encourages families to take an active role in their child's education and development and to be a part of program decision making. Ways in which Early Head Start and Head Start promote parent involvement include:

- **Parent Groups:** Parents automatically become part of a center Parent Group once their child is enrolled in either program. Meetings are scheduled monthly and agendas are planned according to parents' availability and interests.
- **Policy Council:** Parents are asked to represent their center and program option on Policy Council, which is the governing body of the Head Start Program that acts as the voice of parents in making major decisions for the program.
- **"Dads Take Your Child To School Day":** Annually, Head Start centers take part in this state-wide event which encourages father involvement and participation in classroom activities.
- **Volunteering:** Parents are encouraged to volunteer in classrooms, on field trips, during special family fun days, and other ways they are comfortable.
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences and Home Visits:** These one-on-one meetings allow parents to provide input regarding educational and personal goals for their children and family.
- **Socializations:** Early Head Start families are invited to activity-based "play groups" twice a month, which are designed to strengthen the relationship between parent and child.

Kindergarten Preparation

To best prepare children for kindergarten and to ensure the program adheres to state and federal mandates, Early Head Start and Head Start align program educational outcomes with the New York State Early Learning Alignment Crosswalk. This resource is a research-based framework for early childhood professionals that incorporates curriculum and ongoing assessment to craft meaningful educational and developmental experiences for children from birth to age five. This framework further helps preschool educators understand how children learn and develop in all domains and recognize each child's unique abilities and interests.

In addition to educational curriculum, Head Start prepares children, and their families, for kindergarten through a well-developed transition schedule of activities and supports. Once children settle into kindergarten, the program follows up with each family and the school to glean information about each child's experience and to identify trends for program planning and improvement.

During the 2019-2020 year, Opportunities for Otsego piloted "Bridges to Kindergarten". Five newly graduated Head Start children and families were paired with a designated family partner who worked with children in their kindergarten classroom and at home to foster relationships with the school and facilitate linkages for family and school success.





CONTACT US

**3 West Broadway
Oneonta, NY 13820**

P: 607.433.8000

W: www.ofoinc.org