

2023 Annual Report



Ocean County
Office of Senior Services

Maria LaFace, Director

Barbara Jo Crea, Commissioner Liaison

2023 Priorities & Mission

Mission

Here at Senior Services we are committed to providing older adults with information on services and programs that promote their health and well-being and support their independence so that they can age well in Ocean County.



Priorities

Out of 803 polled respondents:

The Top Three Choices to Maintain an Independent Life:

Access to Healthcare: 482

Financial Security: 348

Affordable Services: 320

The Top Three Concerns that Impact the Ability to Maintain an Independent Life:

Chronic Health Issues: 354

Inability to Afford In-Home Care Services: 227

Driving (Unable to or Loss of Ability): 177

The Top Five Services Viewed as a Priority to Maintain an Independent Life:

Information and Assistance: 396

Transportation: 388

Home Delivered Meals: 354

Home Repairs and Maintenance: 332

Personal and In-Home Care Services: 321





We appreciate our 2023
Provider Network!



Maria LaFace

Executive Director

The Ocean County Office of Senior Services, as the federally designated Area Agency on Aging, is the primary planning, coordinating and funding agency for senior programs and services. We begin our planning process by identifying the *priorities* for the year through a variety of means including holding a public hearing, conducting on-line and paper surveys and meeting with stakeholders and community partners. Under the Older Americans Act, the department is then charged with utilizing federal, state and county funds to create and oversee a comprehensive aging network designed to assist older adults lead independent, meaningful and dignified lives in their homes and communities for as long as safely possible.



We achieve this objective through a variety of services including but not limited to:

1. **Access Services** including Information & Assistance, Options Counseling, Outreach, Care Management, Transportation, Assistive Technology and Public Awareness.
2. **Home Support** including Telephone Reassurance, Friendly Visiting, Residential Maintenance, Housekeeping, Home Health Aide Services, Home Sharing and Housing Assistance.
3. **Community Support** including Adult Day Care Services, Adult Protective Services, Legal Assistance, Mental & Physical Health Services, Physical Activity, Education, Socialization & Recreation.
4. **Nutritional Support** including Congregate Nutrition Services, Home Delivered Nutrition, State Weekend Home Delivered Meals, Nutrition Education & Counseling.

2023 Department Highlights

Medical Transportation Initiatives

The Office of Senior Services understands that transportation can be a serious issue for many seniors and can interfere with their ability to get to doctor's appointments. We were fortunate to partner with Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey to expand their Healthy Hop Transportation Program offering free, on-demand, round-trip transportation for medical appointments using Uber. Healthy Hop is easy and convenient for our seniors who can simply call to register for a ride when needed.

Medicare

The Office of Senior Services administers the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Through the SHIP program, our certified counselors provide local, unbiased Medicare counseling and enrollment assistance to eligible beneficiaries in Ocean County. This program provides one-on-one counseling as well as education and outreach events to assist residents navigate the Medicare system as well as help them understand and compare plan options. The Office of Senior Services had a busy open enrollment season with over 6,681 contacts. The full impact of SHIP can be seen in the chart attached.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Pilot Program (SNAP)

The department identified food insecurity as a priority for older adults living on fixed incomes. In an effort to assist our residents combat the rising cost of food, the Office of Senior Services partnered with the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services on a SNAP pilot program to increase senior enrollment in the program. The state provided education and training to Office of Senior Services staff on SNAP benefits and the application process and we administered the pilot in the summer of 2023.

As a result of the pilot program, staff conducted 22 outreach events and reached 1300 older adults in group settings to educate them on SNAP. In addition, staff conducted 500 one on one appointments with residents interested in applying and successfully completed over 150 SNAP applications in 3 short months. The approved SNAP recipients received an average benefit amount ranging from \$95 to \$200.

AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities

The Ocean County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on July 26, 2023 to submit an application to become a member of **The AARP Network of Age Friendly States & Communities**. The resolution acknowledges that the health, well-being and safety of residents of all ages is a high priority in Ocean County and recognizes the growing need for essential resources to successfully age in place. Ocean County's application was approved by AARP on December 28, 2023 and a certificate issued acknowledging the county's commitment to become more age-friendly under the criteria established by AARP. The Ocean County Office of Senior Services along with other county departments and our network of provider agencies will be evaluating our service delivery system and working together on a plan to become more age friendly in the coming months.

JACC Unit Year End Summary

In 2023, the Ocean County Office of Senior Services created a specialized Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving (JACC) unit to meet the growing needs of our age 60+ residents for homecare services. With the exception of Brick Senior Services, the Ocean County Office of Senior Services took on the responsibility for in-house management of all JACC program referrals, Screens for Community Services, home visits, applications and approval processes for those seeking to enroll in the JACC program.

Due to high demand and budgetary constraints, a wait list was implemented in 2022 and continued through August of 2023. Despite having a lengthy wait list, the interest in JACC remained robust. During 2023, the JACC unit managed a total of 293 referrals, conducted 178 Screens for Community Services and completed 87 applications that successfully received both clinical and financial approvals from the state. By September of 2023, additional funding was allocated to Ocean County and the wait list was eliminated. Since that time, referrals to our office have increased by 15% and continue to climb at the start of 2024. Although total program enrollment saw a low of 200 clients due to attrition, we were able to successfully grow enrollment to 234 as of December 31st.

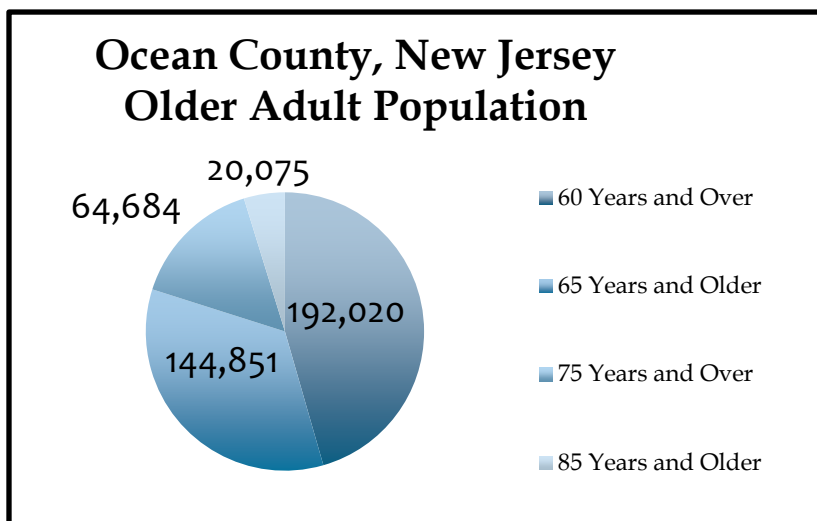
2023 A Year in Review

SHIP Contacts	6,681
SHIP Counselors	40

Outreach Events	65
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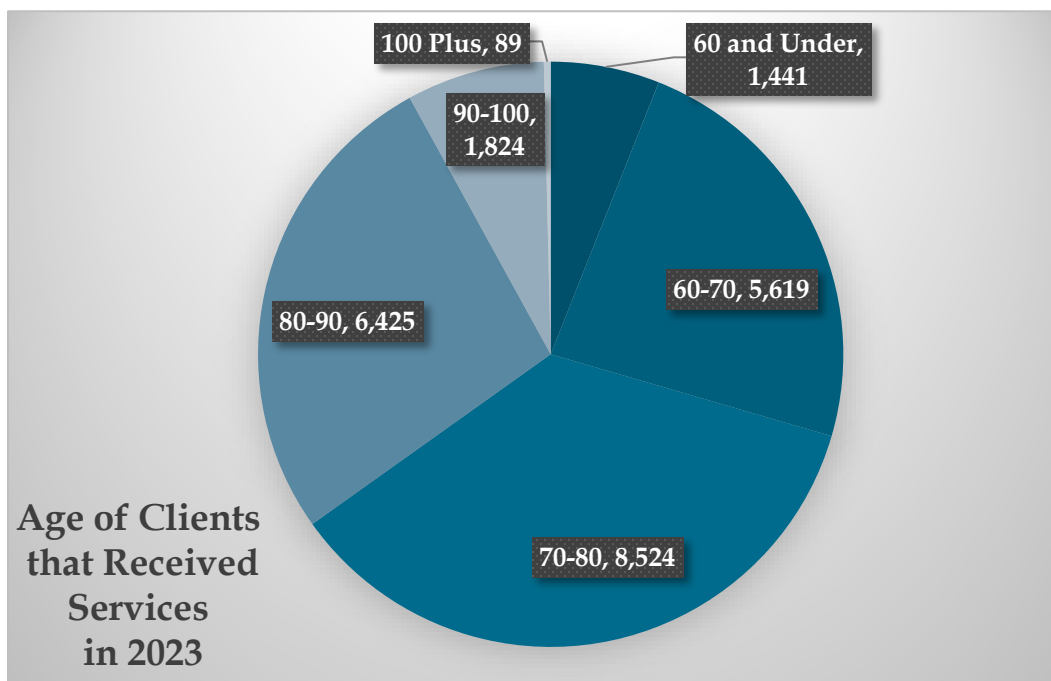
Facebook	1,200 Followers
Newsletter	1,648 Subscribers

Total Clients Served	36,698
Number of Providers	26
Number of Programs	81



Meals on Wheels-Home Delivered	220,517
State Weekend Home Delivered	17,676
Congregate	7,836

Kosher Meals on Wheels	51,442
State Weekend Home Delivered	19,683



Taxonomy	Consumers	2023 Units
Adult Day-Social		18 6,060
Adult Protective Services		1,206 14,329
APC Options Counseling		294 512
Assisted Transportation		888 18,531
Assistive Technology		368 398
Care Management		93 1,439
Certified Home Health Aide		40 6,215
Congregate Nutrition		1,034 17,983
Education		959 6,526
Emergency		170 2,939
Friendly Visiting		340 8,036
Home Delivered Nutrition		1,774 271,959
Housekeeping		135 621
Information and Assistance		9,790 23,753
Information and Assistance- Non Contracted		6,410 17,110
Legal Assistance		154 1,315
Mental Health		274 2,927
NFCSP Assistive Technology		387 1,496
NFCSP Caregiver Mental Health Counseling		190 1,460
NFCSP Group Education		91 575
NFCSP Information and Assistance		1,477 3,873
NFCSP Physical Health		74 211
NFCSP Professional In-Home Education and Support		1 9
NFCSP Residential Maintenance		77 210
NFCSP Respite Care		71 6,489
NFCSP Support Group		147 1,420
NFCSP Trained Volunteer Assistance		20 469
Nutrition Counseling		26 75
Nutrition Counseling- Home Delivered		91 123
Nutrition Education		1,674 242
Nutrition Education- Home Delivered		11,901 17
Outreach		670 832
Physical Activity		1,640 50,229
Physical Health		8 9
Residential Maintenance		517 3,464
Socialization/Recreation		2,349 41,384
State Weekend Home Delivered Meals		554 37,359
Telephone Reassurance		334 9,980
Transportation		232 3,688
Total		36,698 564,267



The Ocean County Office of Senior Services
2023 Annual Report

Ocean County Board of Commissioners

Barbara Jo Crea
Virginia E. Haines
John P. Kelly
Gary Quinn
Frank Sadeghi

Department of Senior Services

Barbara Jo Crea, Commissioner Liaison
Maria LaFace, Director
1027 Hooper Avenue, Building 2
Toms River, NJ 08754

Additional Locations:
Ocean County Southern Center
County Connection at Ocean County Mall

Ocean County Senior Advisory Council

