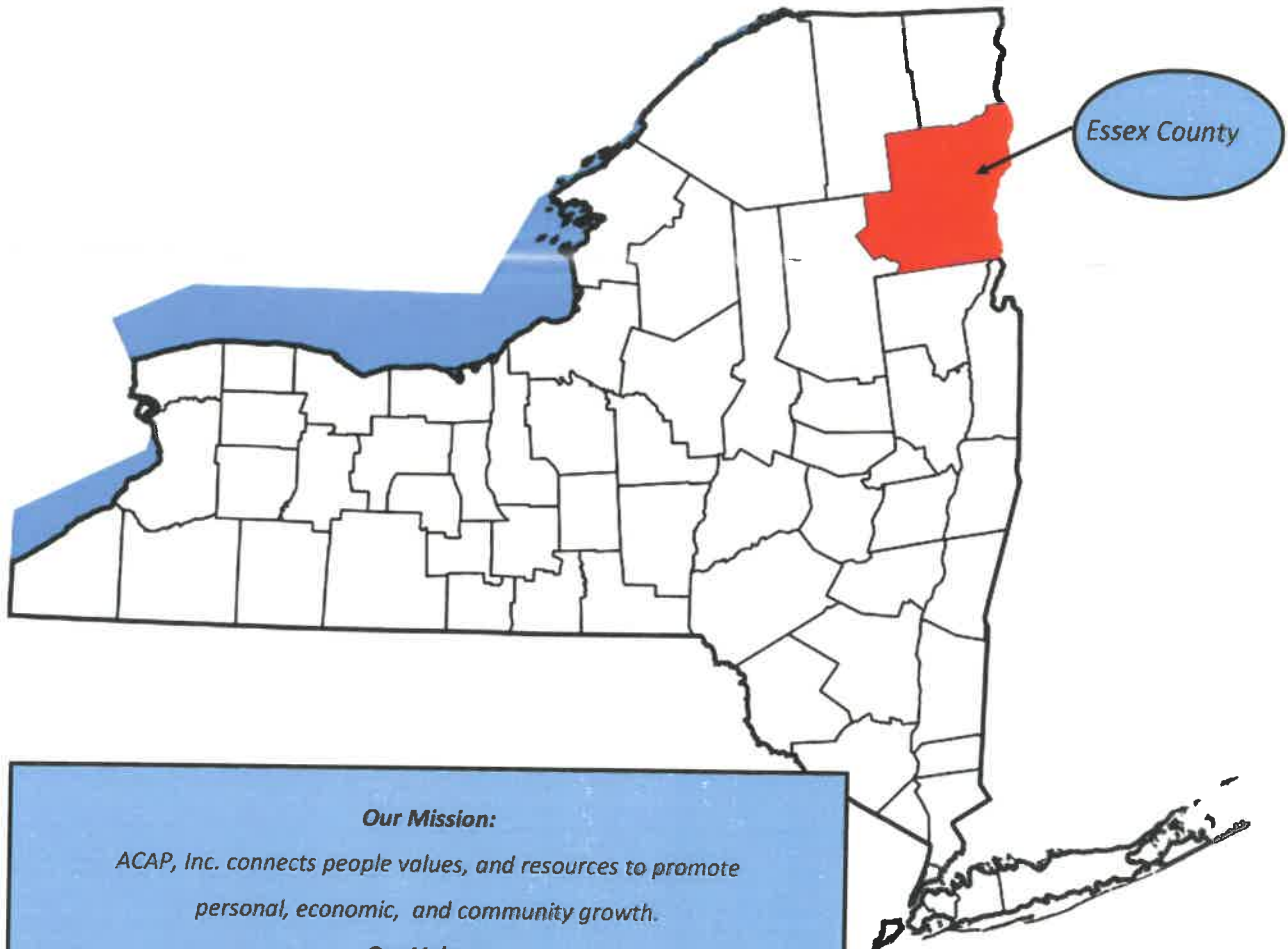




# Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.

## IMPACT REPORT 2018



***Our Mission:***

*ACAP, Inc. connects people values, and resources to promote personal, economic, and community growth.*

***Our Values:***

*Accountability to our customers, partners, and supporters*  
*Integrity as individuals, as a business and as members of the community*  
*Citizenship and shared responsibility for community change*  
*Respect for each individual's capacity to learn and grow*



### ACAP Board Of Directors

James Monty (Public Official) – Chairman  
Michael Tyler (Public Official) – Vice Chair  
Laurie Davis (Consumer Sector Representative) – Secretary  
Scott Wilson (Consumer Sector Representative) – Treasurer  
Lorilee Sheehan (Public Official/Education)  
Archie Depo (Public Official)  
Edna Coonrod (Consumer Sector Representative)  
L. Bridget Killeen (Consumer Sector Representative)  
Wendy Courtright (Private Sector/Financial)  
Amy Quinn (Private Sector/Legal)  
Rev. Fred Shaw (Private Sector/Religious)  
Jay Heald (Private Sector/Business)

### ACAP Management Team

Alan Jones - Executive Director/CEO  
Ashley Glanda - CFO/Director of Business Affairs  
Robert Alexander— Aging Services Director  
Alan Jones - Child Care Director  
Alan Jones - Employment & Training Director  
Morgan Conley—Head Start/Early Head Start Director  
Barbara Allen - Weatherization and Energy Services Director

### Funding Sources

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Energy  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Emergency Food and Shelter Program  
U.S. Department of Labor

#### **New York State:**

Department of State  
Division of Housing and Community Renewal  
Office of Children & Family Services

#### **Essex County:**

Department of Social Services  
Office for Aging

ACAP is an United Way of the Adirondacks partnership agency. As a charitable organization ACAP receives donations from foundations, businesses and the general public.

Serving Clinton, Essex and Franklin Counties



**ADIRONDACK REGION**

Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.  
 7572 Court Street, Suite 2, PO Box 848  
 Elizabethtown, NY 12932  
 acapinc.org/518-873-3207  
 (Serving Essex County, New York)

FY 2016 Budget Information:

CSBG	234,351
State	491,378
Local	191,366
Private	918,432
Federal	5,188,582
<b>Total Budget:</b>	<b>\$7,024,109</b>

<b>Numbers Served:</b>	
Individuals	2,025
<b>Level of Income</b> (HHS Poverty Guidelines)	
Up to 50%	112
51% to 75%	16
76% to 100%	19
101% to 125%	16
126% to 150%	6
151% to 175%	4
176% to 200%	2
201% and over	2

Administrative and Indirect Cost: \$639,059 or 10%

Current Programs:

Aging Services:

Nutrition Program for the Elderly – Home delivered and congregate meal sites (C-1,C-2, EISP and SNAP)

Hospital Food Services – Produce meals for local hospital – (Fee for service)

Child Care

Advantage After School in 4 school districts

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Parenting Classes/Parent Awareness (Fee for service)

Day Care Subsidy Fraud Prevention Grant – Partnership with local DSS

Provider Recruitment and Retention (Cloudsplitter Foundation)

Small Grant for Small Children (Adirondack Foundation)

Community Services

Community Services Block Grant – (Emergency Services; Food Shelves & Outreach)

Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)

Community Action Angels – Volunteer Program

BackPack Program –Weekend Food Program for Elementary School children

Holidays are for Sharing – Toy Drive

Medical Transportation

United Way – Emergency Services

Head Start

Head Start

Early Head Start

Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Employment & Training

Operating Partner of the local One Stop Employment Center

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA youth, adult & dislocated)

## Weatherization and Energy Services

Weatherization

Energy Services – Fee for Service

NYSERDA – Empower NY

## Business Office

Provide Human Resource & Payroll services for North Country Work Force Investment Board (Fee for service).

## Description of the Community Involvement and Civic Organizations support:

Local funding from the United Way, our Local County, Emergency Food Supplement Program (EFSP), and donations from our community enable ACAP to provide emergency food, heat and shelter. In 2017-2018, 201 families received food through our food shelves; 8 families received emergency fuel or utility payments; 42 received emergency rent or shelter; 4 received emergency Home Repair.

ACAP mobilized 304 volunteers who provided 5,715 hours of service to their community through Head Start/Early Head Start, Advantage After School, Nutrition Program for the Elderly and CSBG.

ACAP provides space to our local Chamber of Commerce, the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Human Services Coalition/NY Connects/ Long Term Care Council.

What does this all mean? It means ACAP reached 2,025 individuals in our community by:

- Employment and Training assisted 231 individuals in obtaining a job.
- CSBG assisted 8 families with fuel or utilities that kept them safe and warm and 42 families received services to prevent them from becoming homeless.
- Weatherization increased the heating efficiency of 52 homes.
- Head Start/Early Head Start enrolled 190 children who received immunizations, medical and dental care; increased health and physical development; and participated in pre-school activities that ensure that children are developmentally ready to enter school.
- After School enrolled 114 children enabling parents to work, knowing their children were in a safe, healthy environment where they participated in educational and social activities that helped them to learn and grow.
- Child Care assisted 159 families in accessing quality childcare to support parents ability to work and giving children a safe, healthy environment that supported a better start in life.
- Nutrition Program for the Elderly supported 794 seniors in maintaining an independent living situation thanks to receiving meals at congregate sites or through home delivered meals.

In our rural community, population of 38,598, this is significant.



# Community Services Block Grant

## Emergency Needs

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides core services for our most vulnerable and does so in a way that removes barriers and promotes self-sufficiency.

Emergency Services funding is imperative to our local community. It has the flexibility to meet the ever changing needs and allows us to meet emerging needs in a timely, cost effective manner. Emergency services are at the core of the work we do and includes, but is not limited to eviction prevention, utility shut offs, fuel assistance, food shelves and referrals to services to support families on-going financial security.

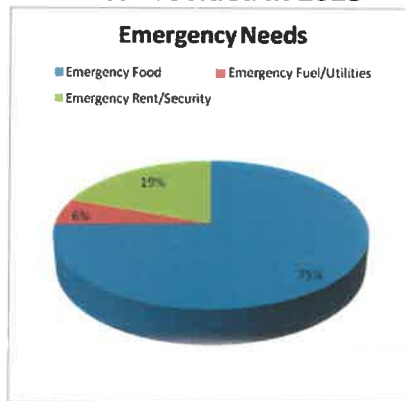
The program has developed strong collaborations with other service providers to strengthen services and prevent duplication.

**Emergency Food: 201**

**Emergency Rent/Security: 42**

**Emergency fuel/utilities: 8**

### Services Provided in 2018



## Medicaid Transportation

Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc. (ACAP) became a Medicaid Transportation provider in 2016, a part of a county wide effort to increase safe and affordable transportation in Essex County

**In 2018 ACAP volunteer drivers provided 1,144 rides to 58 individuals to and from medical appointments.**

The program continues to grow and continues to recruit drivers to support our efforts.



Community Services also coordinates volunteer projects in our community including an annual holiday program that provided toys and gifts for 613 children in 2018.



## COMMUNITY ACTION ANGELS

ACAP became a member of the NYS Community Action Angels in 2009 to better utilize volunteers and community support to meet the needs in our community. Our goal is to create opportunities for people to give back. Since its inception the program has been involved in many projects, most of which target the needs of young children in our community.

In 2013 we started a Backpack Program to provide food for children on the weekends when schools are closed. We work closely with local businesses, foundations, the NYS Regional Food Bank and local schools to target the children most in need. Volunteers pick up the food and transport it to the school and bags are packed with enough food for the children for the entire weekend. Children receive meal options, fruit, bread and milk cards to improve their nutritional intake, making them healthier and ready to learn when they come back to school on Monday.

**35 children receive backpacks every weekend.**

The angels also support the agency by either organizing or participating in events throughout the year. Every year since 2014, the Community Action Angels and ACAP staff volunteered at the Adirondack Marathon in Schroon Lake, passing out water and snacks to the runners. Angel volunteers also help to raise funds for the agency Holiday program and Food Shelf. For more information on the Community Action Angel program, visit our website at [acapinc.org](http://acapinc.org)



## 2018 Impact Report

### Nutrition Program for the Elderly

The Nutrition Program for the Elderly is operated by the Aging Services department of ACAP Inc. We are contracted by the Essex County Office for the Aging to provide healthy meals and welfare checks to qualifying seniors over the age of 60 or folks of any age who qualify through other programs.



In 2018 we delivered over 2,700 meals every week. That is over 145,000 for the year. We deliver folks enough food for one or two servings a day (including weekends) and even raw food bags to those who can cook. Each meal meets nutritional goals that follow the dietary guidelines for Americans while also trying to meet the needs of 100 different requests daily. We continually strive to improve our foods. We run a sixteen-day rolling menu that changes four times a year with the seasons. In 2018 we delivered 96,688 home delivered meals, an increase of 4634 from the previous year. We are phasing out our “Stock our Shelves” and “Breakfast bag” options so we will continue to see those numbers shrink, this year we delivered only 30,000.

The Nutrition Program maintains 12 congregate meal sites that served 14000 meals this year. This year we closed the St. Armand site. We could not find anyone to run it and the town of Bloomingdale changed their intentions for the space we used in their Town Hall. The Site Managers for these sites are responsible for the food quality, food safety and preparation for anywhere from 2 to 30 people every day. The managers are responsible for the Health Inspections twice a year. We continue to strive for better Health Inspections and 2018 was again successful when nine sites did not receive a violation in their inspections. That is the second year in a row for that accomplishment. The importance of this success means food safety requirements were in line with the expectations from the state. This is a very difficult task in all 12 kitchens.



In November 2018 we moved to our new facility in Westport. This new kitchen was built specifically for the Nutrition Program and is state of the art and we now have the space to start doing quick chill meals in improve quality and possibly to allow the clients to choose from a variety of meals. We are very thankful to Essex County and all those who helped make this new kitchen a reality. A true commitment by the local legislation to the Seniors of Essex County for years to come. Thank You!

Thanks to the move we now have a more direct line of delivery available with the Northway minutes away and we are now directly on route 9. Aging Services maintains 15 daily routes with a fleet of 9 vehicles. Every day we drive well over 700 miles and deliver an average of 60



meals by each driver. The drivers transport in all weather conditions in all seasons. We have a diverse group of drivers and volunteers that deliver food and check on the well-being of clients. They are out there in the heat and the cold to make a positive impact each and every day.

The central kitchen is the backbone of Aging Services. With the exception of our three satellite sites, we cook all of the meals out of the kitchen. We store the vehicle fleet

here and all the food, paper and dry items here. We also keep our office here. Up to four cooks are on staff to cook, prepare and package food for home delivery and congregate sites. These cooks are skilled in quantity cooking to make sure the recipes are followed properly. They cook hundreds of pounds of product at a time. This takes proper coordination and planning throughout the week to deliver on the clients' expectations.

## Elizabethtown Community Hospital

The Elizabethtown Community Hospital contracts with Aging Services to maintain food service operations at the hospital for its patients. This year we served over 15000 meals. The chefs have been serving up to twenty-five patients three times a day; every day. There are no days off, if there is a patient then we are there rain or shine to provide a healthy and comforting meal. We work closely with the Hospital staff to fulfill the nutritional needs of every patient, whatever it takes. In 2018, they became completely self-sufficient. They do their own ordering, receiving and managing. They are no longer dependent on the Nutrition Program to function.

# Employment & Training

## **ONEWORKSOURCE**

ACAP is the host partner of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Essex County OneworkSource (OWS). WIOA includes Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs. ACAP/OWS partners with Champlain Valley Educational Services (CVES), NYS Department of Labor, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, North Country Community College and Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) to provide job search, job readiness and employment & training services.

The number of job seekers coming to OWS in 2018 declined due to low unemployment rates and an increase in the number of job openings in educational and health services. The number of visits to OWS from January to December 2018 was 843. The customers who reported employment to OWS was 198. Some of the jobs in Essex County are seasonal. The average unemployment rate from January 2018 to December 2018, in Essex County, was 5.05%. The average unemployment rate for NYS was 4.2%. Private sector jobs in the North Country increased by 400 or 0.4 percent, to 111,000 in the year ending December 2018. The greatest gains were in educational and health services (+300), natural resources, mining and construction (+300) and leisure and hospitality (+200). Losses occurred in trade, transportation and utilities (-400).

Twenty customers received tuition assistance from WIOA funding. These students majored mostly in nursing, EMT/Paramedic, or in other health care programs. Ten students graduated with a post-secondary credential. The remaining students have a latter graduation date. In 2018 there were 197 students enrolled in the High School Equivalency (HSE) program. Of these students, 6 received their HSE Diploma.

TANF Summer Youth was most successful in summer 2018 with 12 youth participating from 7 of the towns in Essex County.

## **ONEWORKSOURCE SUCCESS STORY**

A single mother, age 20, without a high school diploma contacted OneWorkSource for assistance. Our Youth Services Coordinator helped her to enroll in the High School Equivalency program and provided career counseling. This young woman was working part-time at a retail store making minimum wage and raising a one-year old son. It was difficult for her to juggle studying for the HSE, work, and child rearing, but she persevered. Her career goal was to become an auto mechanic. She received her HSE diploma and with career guidance, she obtained a job with a local auto repair shop. The owner of the garage was so impressed with her work that he suggested she take advanced courses in auto mechanics. The WIOA Youth Program was able to purchase a computer for her so she could enroll in the on-line diagnostic mechanic courses. In addition, she was assisted with clothes for work and gas coupons. She has accomplished so much in less than a year: high school equivalency diploma, full-time work, and advanced training. This young woman is well on her way to a successful career.

[www.oneworksource.com](http://www.oneworksource.com)

**Partners:** Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc. • CV-TEC • NYS Department of Labor  
North Country Community College • Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES/VR)





# Child Care Resource and Referral

Quality child care is essential to the healthy development of children and the economic health of our community. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) provides a leadership role in developing professional, well trained child care providers to support quality child care for our community.

The program provides information and referral, training, advocacy, and education to ensure that quality child care is available for all children and families.

## CURRENT ACTIVE CHILD CARE

Licensed/Registered Providers: 36

Exempt Legally Providers: 21

Small Day Care Centers: 1

After School Programs: 4

## REFERRALS

Children needing care: 157

Referrals: 109

Children receiving care: 93

## After School Programs

ACAP After School Programs in Moriah, Schroon Lake, Westport and AuSable offer fun activities and a safe, healthy environment for children at the end of the school day. Children receive help with homework, participate in team building and learning activities, and enjoy healthy snacks on a daily basis.

<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>Moriah 41</b>	<b>Schroon Lake 15</b>
	<b>Westport 28</b>	<b>AuSable 21</b>



## Child and Adult Food Program

CACFP provides a partial reimbursement of the cost of healthy meals served in day care homes.

25 Participating Providers

## TRAININGS

Child Care's certified trainer provides trainings that cover the mandated subject areas as directed by OCFS. Trainings help providers achieve their 15 hour annual training requirements. As a certified First Aid and CPR trainer and the only qualified trainer for Center Based Health and Safety in the county, the trainer is able to provide the mandatory 15 hour classes that center directors must attend. Trainings are offered to all modalities of childcare and all after school staff.

**Number of Trainings offered: 25**  
**Number of attendees: 203**



## 2018 Trainings

- CPR/First Aid – 6 classes offered  
33 participants
- Health and Safety for Child Care Center and School Age Directors – 4 offered  
17 participants
- Health and Safety for Family and Group Family Providers – 2 offered  
7 participants
- Video Conferences – 3 offered  
24 participants
- Guest Speakers – 4 offered  
42 participants
- In House Trainings – 6 offered  
80 participants

# Head Start/Early Head Start

## Family Fun Time

Each month, Head Start families are invited to participate in planned Family Fun Times. This is an opportunity for families to gather, join in a family activity or project, participate in a parent training component and enjoy a meal together.

Early Head Start families are encouraged to attend group socializations twice monthly. These groups give children an opportunity to socialize with their peers and their family a chance to network with each other.

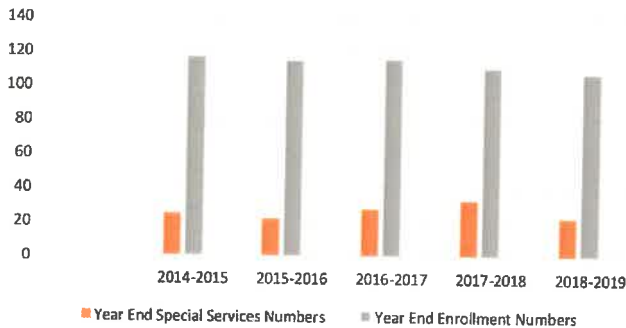
Program Health staff screen children's vision and hearing using state of the art, age appropriate screening equipment.

If the need becomes evident, children are referred immediately for further exam and/or treatment.



*"One thing I loved is how much the staff care about our children."  
EHS Parent*

Special Services Comparative Data



Therapists and Service Providers (speech, occupational, physical, special education, counseling) collaborate with our program to provide direct services to children while in our care. We have maintained an approximate average of 25% of our HS enrolled children who have received such services over the last 5 years.



*99% of HS enrolled children are fully immunized!  
100% have had a lead screening!*

Our Special Delivery program option has welcomed

**6**

new babies in the 2018-2019

program year with **4** more on the way!



*"One thing I loved was hearing about my child's day."  
HS Parent*

We are proud to offer direct Mental Health services to all enrolled families at no cost to them. Group observations are provided throughout our program as well as individual observations upon parental consent.

play



# Head Start/Early Head Start

*"The staff go beyond the physical and emotional well-being of the children, making them feel confident and happy. Head Start was a very positive experience."  
HS Parent*

ACAP, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start are proud to announce this year's program-wide theme;

**P.R.I.D.E.**  
*Professionalism  
 Responsibility  
 Integrity  
 Determination  
 Excellence*

Staff are committed to providing all services to the children and families we serve, with pride.



**2018-2019**

Funded enrollment:

Head Start  
**125**

6 Center Based  
 (2 PreK Collaborations)  
 1 Home Based option

Early Head Start  
**72**

8 Home Based options

25% of ACAP, Inc. Board Members are past or present Head Start parents.

## We are all learners!

All Early Head Start staff have received training in HVRS (Home Visiting Rating Scale).



*"My child sings to me in the car now."  
HS Parent*

4 staff are currently enrolled in continuing education, such as college courses, the CDA (Child Development Associate) credential, or Family Services certification.

3 staff have recently earned their Bachelor's Degree!



*Congratulations*

All enrolled families are eligible to participate in the parenting curriculum; *Positive Solutions for Families*.

We offer this **free of charge** to all parents and caregivers of HS/EHS enrolled children.

50% of staff are current or former Early/Head Start parents



# Weatherization and Energy Services

Below are shared success stories from our appreciative customers

*"Thank you to ACAP for the fantastic job your staff has done through your weatherization program in my home. Prior to your installation of the attic insulation, spray foam insulation along the basement perimeter and all the other areas that you corrected in order to decrease the heat loss. I was going*

*through an awful lot of firewood and oil. Your work here had been so effective that just days after your work was completed I actually had to get up to check my thermostat to see if I had turned it down because the furnace had stopped running so much. The thermostat was still set at the original temperature that I had prior to ACAP coming to work on the improvements so this shows that what was done here is actually working. Thanks again for all you have done for me and I will be sure to let others know that you are here to assist those of us who truly need assistance." Peter M.*

*"A wonderful job was done & I cannot thank the team enough. All of the little things that often get overlooked have been remedied and our home is now a happier, warmer, safer, energy efficient abode. I am thrilled with the results and hope many more homes are blessed with the good fortune you offer. I may be considered low income, but proud of what I have accomplished & with help along the way" Joan and family,*

**The inception of the Weatherization Program in Essex County was in 1976. Since then, we have weatherized over 3,300 homes with an average yearly savings to the household of \$350.00.**

## Weatherization program provides vital services to Essex County Neighbors

*Weatherization increases the comfort and safety of homes and reduces the heating and utility cost for low income families and senior citizens. Measures such as air sealing and insulation can increase the energy efficiency of homes, creating significant savings for our most vulnerable population.*

### **Why is Weatherization Important?**

The United States Census Bureau reports the population in Essex County, NY, as of 2018, was 37,956 with a poverty rate of 10.6%. The county has 15,257 households and an owner-occupied housing rate (2013-2017) of 76.0%

While Essex County represents a small portion of New York State it contains a large percentage of poverty and an **immediate** need for weatherization assistance. **3611 homes** in Essex County were built prior to 1960 and **9815 homes were built 1939 or earlier.** (This information was taken from a detailed profile of Essex County NY). Homes of this era were not built with energy efficiency in mind and many to this day do not have insulation in the attics or sidewalls.

Older homes are affordable for low income families to purchase, or rent, but the cost of heat and utilities end up putting a high burden on families and the elderly. If you look at statistics, the average person living in these older homes spend 20% of their income or more on utilities, including heating cost. With the long, harsh winters in the North Country, the cost on heating and electric create an unacceptable burden on low income families.

**Cutting funding to this essential program would be devastating to the many senior citizens and families who are depending on the weatherization program to ensure their homes are energy efficient, increasing their ability to afford to heat their homes. We need to know our neighbors are safe and warm and able to survive on their limited incomes.**

# Nutrition program moves to new home

## CCE also primed for a move

By Kim Dedam  
STAFF WRITER

**ELIZABETHTOWN** | Two county offices are in the process of moving: one into new facilities at the Essex County Fairgrounds in Westport and one out of historic headquarters there.

Senior nutrition program staff were moved in phases last week from Hand Avenue in Elizabethtown to the fairground facility.

They readied service operations on Monday. Essex County Public Works Department Deputy Superintendent Jim Dougan said county crews worked daily last week to move the kitchen and related equipment.

They completed the move on Friday after senior meals were prepared and out for delivery. "Nutrition is moved in," Dougan told the Sun on Monday.

The move was delayed in part last summer because the wrong dishwashing equipment arrived. Dougan said it took quite a bit of

time to get the right equipment here.

The \$1.6 million facility was built to replace an aging and antiquated kitchen and food preparation site after a state Department of Health inspection in 2015 found numerous code violations at the Court Street facility.

Repairs to the structure in Elizabethtown proved cost prohibitive.

The project to build anew was put in motion in 2015 and won \$400,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds.

Supervisors toured the new building as construction wrapped up last summer.

The senior nutrition program is part of Essex County's Office for the Aging budget, and managed in cooperation with Adirondack Community Action Programs.

Over 1,400 meals are prepared daily by staff for elders in towns around Essex County.

### CCE RELOCATION

In the meantime, nearby neighbors are preparing to move out of their historic fair-ground property.

Staff at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) are relocating to Lewis.

County supervisors have plans to repair the

first floor of the historic building, addressing code issues to include electrical updates for fire and safety, along with weatherization improvements related to the old siding. Built to host Junior Achievement camps and summer activities in the 1920s, it was not insulated.

Cornell Cooperative Extension's farm resources and 4-H staff are moving to a former Jehovah Witness meeting space. The county purchased the property on Route 9 for \$165,000 earlier this year.

"That building never had cable (internet) connections before," Dougan said.

"We're bringing fiber optic cable to it. That work is scheduled to be completed within the next two weeks."

CCE cannot operate its web-based services at two locations at the same time, according to Laurie Davis, coordinator for Adirondack Harvest and CCE's office manager.

"We can't move until that's ready," Davis said. "The Cornell internet system cannot function here and there at the same time."

The good news, she said, is that they will keep all of the same phone numbers and extensions.

"We have stuff packed and we're hoping

to move everything at once," Davis said.

A date certain for the big move is not set. Dougan said Essex County DPW retrofit the building for use as office space.

The electrical service was upgraded to 200 amps and a fire alarm panel was installed. In addition, county DPW crews built walls to add a conference room and work areas for the staff of seven.

Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) is the subcontractor for fiber optic connection to the building, Dougan said.

"They are going to install the outside wires this week and make the final fiber optic connections next week," he said on Monday.

The five Essex County Soil and Water Department employees displaced as the historic CCE building is repaired are moving the county DPW complex in Lewis. A \$100,000 addition is planned there, as well, pending final permit approval.

Earlier this year, supervisors were told that the county's Community Resources Department could join Soil and Water at the DPW addition in Lewis. Plans look to eventually relocate the county Public Defender and Probation offices as well. ■

# Getting a 'Head Start

## Pre-K/Head Start "Early Bridges" programs expand in Essex County

By Kim Dedam  
STAFF WRITER

**ELIZABETHTOWN** | New programs for children at Head Start and pre-Kindergarten are growing to reach the youngest of Essex County residents.

School readiness and parent engagement are key components of this year's enrollment effort.

Coordinated through Adirondack Community Action Programs Inc. (ACAP), the pre-K "Early Bridges" program is expanding at Elizabethtown-Lewis Central School (ELCS) this year and into AuSable Forks Elementary School.

Both programs are collaborative, established through Head Start in concert with funding from each school district.

Morgan Conley is director of Head Start and Early Head Start at ACAP.

Her role coordinates many parts, fit together like tapestry to address all facets of school readiness: rural childcare, early education, nutrition, health and family support needs around Essex County.

"We have 19 children now at ELCS and we are opening a new room this fall," Conley said of expansion in the county seat.

"These aren't 'classes' but are shared activity centers. This year we are moving into AuSable Forks Elementary with Principal Gigi Mason. We have room for 20 children," Conley said.

The dual pre-K/Head Start program in schools is available to families in district towns and also in nearby areas once the program area is served.

ELCS, for example, offers pre-K/Head Start options for children in Wadhams, Elizabethtown, Lewis and Westport or by request if a family member travels to Elizabethtown every day.

"We encourage everyone to apply," ACAP Executive Director Alan Jones said.

Standalone Head Start programs exist in other sections of Essex County, including Saranac Lake, Lake Placid, Moriah and Ticonderoga.

For towns without established dual pre-K/Head Start or designated Head Start centers, home-based education is designed for children and parents at home.

The same focus on school readiness applies, Conley said.

"We are increasing enrollment everywhere," Conley explained of the reach toward school readiness his year.

Asked what defines "school readiness," Conley outlined part of the early focus for children, ages 3 and 4.

"Social skills, education, health and well being, nutrition and early development are all components of our program," she said.

"We do provide services for children with special needs," Conley said.

"It is made to work for the whole family."

Sheila Bridge is Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility and Attendance Coordinator for ACAP Head Start.

"We really try to focus on parents as partners," Bridge said.

"Parents are welcomed at any time to attend classroom activities. They are welcome to have meals with us. They can volunteer to work in the classrooms."

"We really encourage parents to be active in their child's

### TO FIND OUT MORE

Parents can register now for school-based pre-K/Head Start "Early Bridge" programs at ELCS and in AuSable Forks.

They can register for stand-alone centers in communities including Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, Moriah and Ticonderoga.

ACAP is open to help parents explore options for home-based Head Start educational programs and for Early Head Start which includes pre-natal resources.

ACAP is also the county childcare resource and referral center. There is no cost for participation in Head Start or Early Head Start programs. Parents can also call ACAP to find out more about school readiness at 518-873-3207 ext. 232. ■

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Serta Mattresses!



20 SETS FOR

# ' on school readiness



Staff at ACAP ready to expand enrollment for school readiness and Head Start/pre-K and home-based curriculum this year.

*Photo by Kim Dedam*

education," Jones said.

Head Start works to connect parents and their children to local resources beyond the school or home setting.

"We help families find a dental home or a medical home with well-child checkups," Conley said.

"And we will assist with transportation to help a parent get their child to appointments," Bridge said.

At least five staff are in each pre-K/Head Start classroom, Conley said.

Breakfast and lunch are provided free to children.

ACAP has two nurses and a health assistant on staff to help coordinate Head Start and Early Headstart resources.

And many kindergarten teachers serve on the program's advisory committee.

With so many arms reaching around the community in various ways, school readiness is focused by age.

Early Head Start resources support families and children from pre-natal to age three, usually a three-year time span as needed, Conley said.

Head Start and dual pre-K/Head Start is designed for children who will turn three by Dec. 1 of the current school year, and that curriculum runs for two years until the child begins kindergarten.



Buses are provided to accommodate pre-K/Head Start combined, with programs at ELCS and AuSable Forks scheduled from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Individual Head Start education centers are run via accredited childcare facilities and home-based Early Head Start and Head Start in towns without school or childcare centers are scheduled to fit a parent's schedule.

It is a lot of moving parts, but the staff at Head Start and ACAP are ready to answer questions families might have about what is available in their area.

The entire system is expanding, Conley said.

"We are increasing enrollment everywhere."

"Even in September there may be movement, so we will have openings in sites that we think are full."

ACAP has headquarters in Elizabethtown and parents can stop in at 7572 Court St. to find out more about what options are available and apply.

"Anyone can come here anytime," Conley said. "I would love to talk with them." ■



**Connecting Communities – Improving Lives**

### **Looking Ahead**

2018 was an extremely busy year for Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc. (ACAP). From a new Nutrition Kitchen, to consolidation of the OneWorkSource into the main office space, the agency has made strides in improving services to the residents in Essex County.

This year ACAP worked with the Office for the Aging and Essex County to secure funds to build a new Nutrition Kitchen in Westport. The state of the art building will increase the quality of food delivered to seniors throughout the county on a daily basis. The new location is more centrally located in the county reducing travel and delivery times.

OneWorkSource Business and Employment Center completed its move to ACAP's main office. The move supports collaboration between OneWorkSource partners including Department of Labor, Champlain Valley Education Services, North Country Community College, ACCES/VR, and the many programs offered through Adirondack Community Action Programs. Moving OneWorkSource into the main office, will enhance our ability to share ideas and strengthen collaborations. OneWorkSource not only works as a location to access partner services, it is a resource for those seeking assistance in finding employment.

2018 has also seen a critical increase in a need to strengthen services for families affected by the drug epidemic in our rural community. Over the past year agency staff received training from Essex County Sheriff's Office and other resources to strengthen their ability to recognize symptoms of abuse and giving them the support they need to work with the families.

The agency is also part of a county-wide coalition that has come together to focus on issues surrounding primarily the heroin and opioid epidemic. In support of increasing services focused on these issues the North Country Workforce Development Board, which ACAP is a part of, applied for and was awarded funding for an Opioid Grant. The two year grant totaling over \$358,000 is a collaborative grant between the three OneWorkSource Centers in Clinton/Essex/ Franklin Counties.

Training is an important aspect of what we do. Staff meet and exceed mandatory trainings for their programs yearly. The agency also provides training on initiatives which affect the families we serve. For example, ACAP provided a full day training for staff on ACES – Adverse Childhood Experiences, increasing staff's ability to work with children and families dealing with issues of abuse.

We continue to strive to strengthen our ability to identify and respond to the needs of our community. We have recently completed our triennial community assessment and are in the process of setting goals for the next three years. As an agency we recognize the need to change and adapt, not only as an agency, but in assuring we have a well-trained and professional staff to effectively have a positive impact on our community.