Food Security

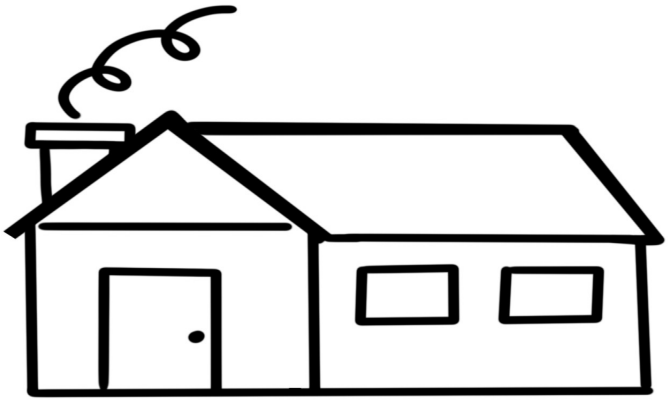
In 2021, food pantries located in New Bremen, Harrisville, Port Leyden, and Copenhagen provided the equivalent of **20,688 meals** to families. The buying power of the Food Bank of Central New York was essential in this effort.
Likewise, the Northern New York Community Foundation was vital to the process by providing substantial donations to food pantries, and administering additional contributions from the WinDenmark Advised Fund during the year. Many other groups in our community helped out the pantries with food drives as well. We are appreciative of all these efforts!

Shelter

Safe and affordable housing can be a challenge for families in poverty. In 2021, LCOI helped over **1,300 families** in Jefferson and Lewis counties with rental assistance through Housing Choice Vouchers which totaled more than **$8.5 million** in landlord subsidies between both counties. Even if a family has a place to stay, the housing costs don't end there. Heat bills can erode the monthly budget drastically.

Because of this, Opportunities provides weatherization services to help make homes more energy efficient. In 2021, we increased energy efficiency to over **40 homes**; this included replacing windows, furnace cleaning and tuning, and adding insulation in walls, attics, and crawl spaces. Funds for these services were administered by NYS Homes and Community Renewal, with supplemental services funded through the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

There are some members of our community who need extra one-time help paying their rent/mortgage or emergency utility assistance due to unforeseen circumstances. Through the Emergency Food and Shelter, administered by United Way Worldwide, the agency assisted another **66 families** with these acute needs.



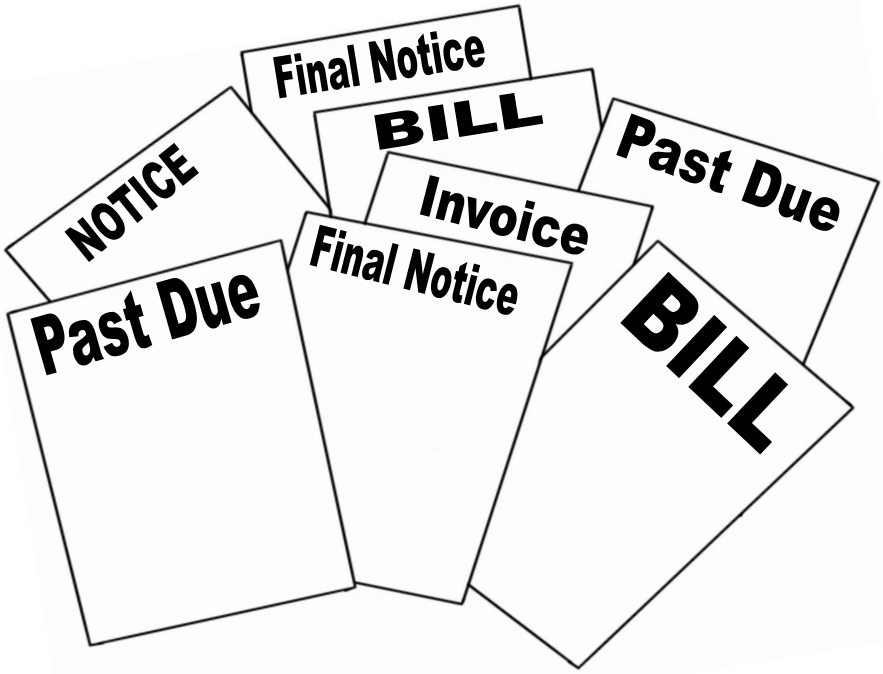
Safety

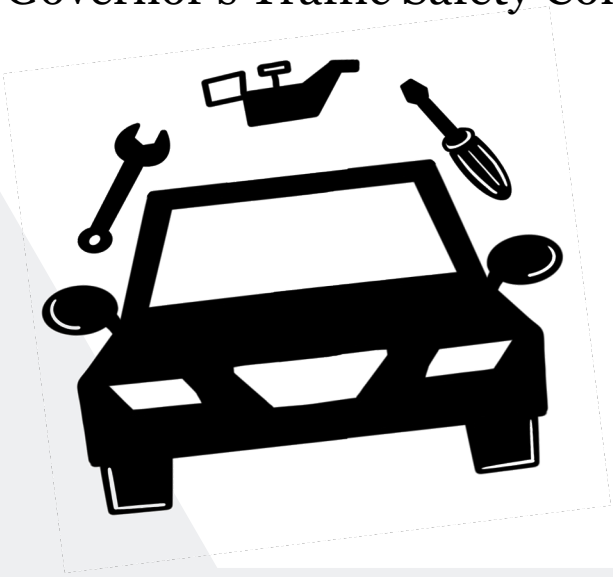
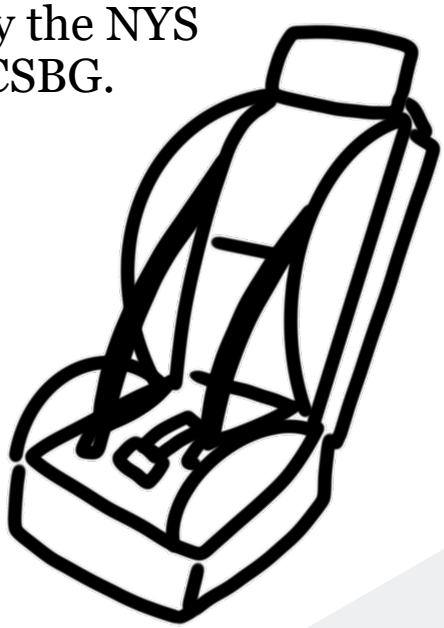
People should not have to live in fear of physical, mental, financial, or sexual abuse. Unfortunately, such problems do exist in Lewis County despite its reputation as a safe place to live and raise a family. To address victimization, LCOI has a Victim Services program which served **250 people** in 2021. Under this program, the agency operates a safe dwelling where families can begin the next chapter in their lives. That safe dwelling provided **231 protected nights** during the year. Other services include operating a 24/7 crisis hotline, providing many counseling services, completing orders of protection, and assisting victims with restitution claims. The Victim Services Program also assists with a joint satellite Child Advocacy Center project spearheaded by our neighboring cohort-agency, the Victims Assistance Center of Jefferson County. Our Victim Services program is funded through the NYS Office of Victim Services, Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Criminal Justice Services, the County of Lewis through the Department of Social Services, and private foundations. If you or someone you know has been a victim and needs help, please contact us at our crisis hotline number, **315-376-HELP,** which is available 24 hours a day.

Financial Security

Many people in poverty are eager to take control of their money instead of being controlled by financial pressures. We provide money management tips and face-to-face meetings with people to help provide tools for them to build a better relationship with their money. Funded by CSBG grants, these resources help people build budgets, learn to live within their means, and develop essential money management skills. The agency also provided Representative Payee services for **17 people**.

Our thrift store, "Opportunity Knocks" is a great resource for volunteerism and a place to buy lightly used items at a great price to stretch your own budget. The proceeds from sales at the thrift store also generate funds for services that grants don't cover.



Critical Needs

Unmet critical needs come in many forms: vehicle repairs, monthly car or insurance payments, beds or other furniture, appliances, clothing, gas cards, car seats, hygiene products, medical devices, and so many more. In 2021 we helped **210 individuals** with **$44,500** in critical needs assistance. This was made possible by funding from Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) administered by the NYS Department of State, Stewart's Holiday Match, private donations, and our own unrestricted revenues from the proceeds of the Opportunity Knocks Thrift Store. Further, we partnered with the United Way of Northern New York ALICE program in an outcome-based approach to meeting individual needs. In addition to the critical needs above, having safe and proper fitting car seats should not be something reserved only to families able to afford them. Because of this, LCOI has 3 certified Car Seat Technicians who, in 2021, provided **68 car seats** to help keep our littlest county residents safe. This program was supported by Child Passenger Safety, administered by the NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee and CSBG.