Food Security

In 2023, food pantries located in New Bremen, Harrisville, Port Leyden, and Copenhagen provided the equivalent of 38,286 meals. This is over 40% more than the previous year. 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 the pantries with food drives as well. We appreciate all of these efforts!

Copenhagen Food Pantry:
9371 NY-12, Copenhagen, NY 13626
Basement of St. Mary's Church
Open Hours: Third Wednesday 4-6PM

Harrisville Food Pantry:
14206 South Creek Road
Harrisville NY 13648
Open Hours: First Tuesday 7-8PM
3rd Tuesday 10-11AM

New Bremen Food Pantry:
8255 State Route 812, Lowville, NY 13367
Open Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30AM-3PM

Port Leyden Food Pantry:
7108 North Street, Port Leyden, NY 13433
St. Martin's Rectory
Open Hours: Monday-Friday 9AM-1PM

Shelter

Safe and affordable housing can be a challenge for families in poverty. In 2023, LCOI helped over 1,300 families in Jefferson and Lewis Counties with rental assistance through Housing Choice Vouchers which totaled more than $10 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.

Shelter Continued

In 2023, 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). Some of our seniors need accessibility improvements to their home in order to remain there; things such as access ramps, widening doors, and modifying bathrooms allow this to happen. In 2023 we improved the homes of senior citizens through an OFA Home Modification Grant, funded by Lewis County Office for the Aging. 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 Emergency Food and Shelter, administered by United Way Worldwide, and a Global Partners LP donation, the agency assisted many 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 331 people in 2023. Unfortunately, this is a 10% increase over the prior year. Under this program, the agency operates a safe dwelling where families can begin the next chapter in their lives. That safe dwelling provided 390 protected nights during the year, and even 66 nights for pets through our Pet Safe program. Other services include operating a 24/7 crisis hotline, providing many counseling services, completing orders of protection, assisting victims with restitution claims, and serving youth who have been sexually exploited.
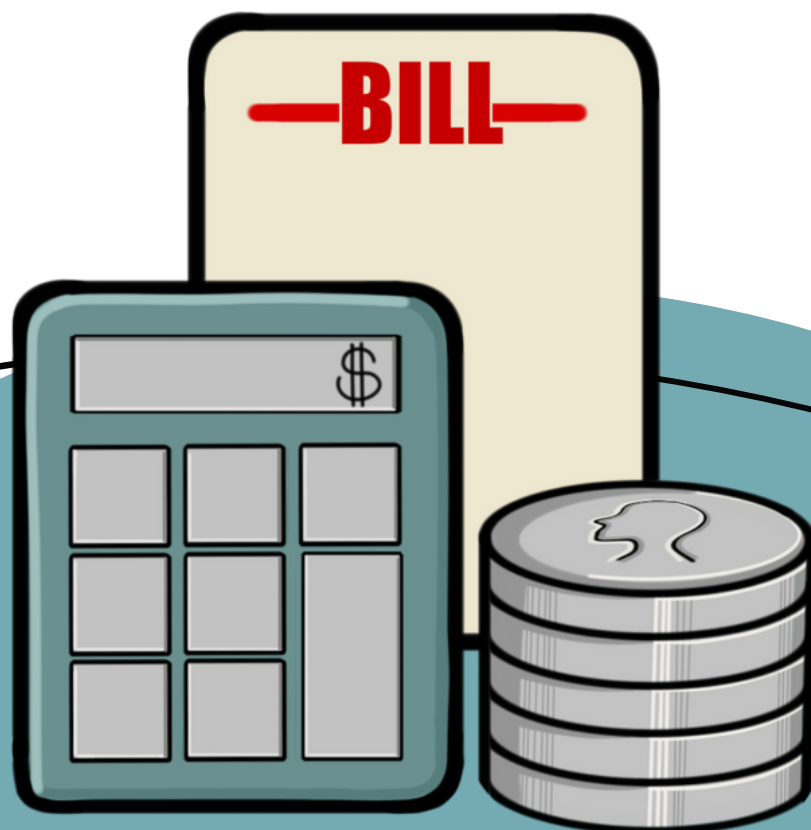
Safety Continued

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.
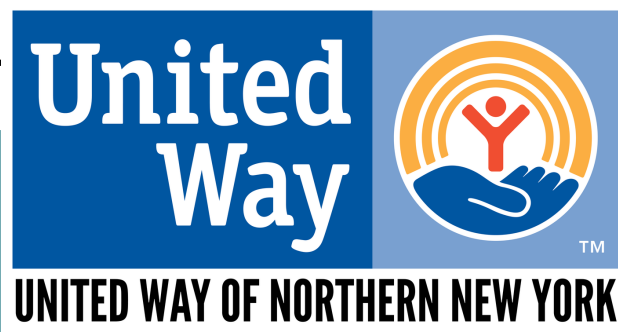
Financial Security

Many people in poverty are eager to take control of their money instead of being controlled by financial pressures. We offer 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 20 people.

Critical Needs

Unmet critical needs come in many forms: vehicle repairs, monthly car or insurance payments, beds for a child, or other household needs like furniture, appliances, clothing, gas cards, car seats, hygiene products, medical devices, and many more. In 2023 we helped 76 individuals with $17,300 in critical needs assistance. This was made possible by funding from Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) administered by the NYS Department of State, the United Way of Northern New York ALICE initiative, Stewart's Holiday Match, private donations, and our own unrestricted revenues from the proceeds of the Opportunity Knocks Thrift Store.

United Way
UNITED WAY OF NORTHERN NEW YORK

Car Seats

In addition to the critical needs above, having safe and properly fitting car seats should not be something reserved only to families able to afford them. Because of this, LCOI has 4 certified Car Seat Technicians who, in 2023, provided 54 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.

Our Car Seat Technicians:

Shauna Roggie

Melody Mercurio

Judy LaBrake

Heather Kloster

Thrift Store

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.