

SENIOR SERVICES NY CONNECTS

FROZEN MEALS



This year to date Erie County Senior Services reached out to all registered participants and are currently serving over 1,500 meals to seniors across Erie County. Recently We have also expanded the number of meals that seniors can choose. We originally offered one box per week with a choice of three or five meals per box. With the expansion, seniors now have the choice of choosing two boxes. They can choose up to a total of ten meals per week! The program continues to grow in popularity. The senior centers are in the process of reopening congregate dining, but that will not end the **Frozen Meal Program**. We will continue to offer the frozen meals for seniors who are not comfortable with indoor dining.

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FROZEN MEALS

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The **Frozen Meal Congregate Dining Pick Up Program** is unique for a few reasons. First, it gives seniors a safe, nutritionally balanced meal that can be eaten in the comfort of their own home. Second, the menu for the meals is created by Erie County Senior Services Registered Dietitians to ensure that the seniors are getting a well-balanced meal. Third, the meals are picked up at local senior centers and senior housing complexes. The set up provides the opportunity for a health/wellness check to be performed by the staff and volunteers who help with distributing the meals. Last of all, it provides seniors with safe, social interaction which helps when trying to combat social isolation.



Erie County Stay Fit Dining

Erie County Senior Services is pleased to offer **Frozen Meals** at one of our participating Senior Center locations near you!

- ❖ Curbside pickup once a week.
- ❖ Bread, milk and dessert will be included.
- ❖ A suggested contribution is \$3 per meal but no one will be turned away for lack of ability to pay.
- ❖ The contribution can be in cash, check or EBT.

For more information or to register for this program, please call 858-7639.

Frozen Meals Pickup Locations:

Akron-Newstead Senior Citizen	Amherst Senior Center
Boston Senior Citizen Center	Cayuga Village Apartments
Cheektowaga Senior Center	Clarence Senior Citizen Center
Friends to the Elderly	Concord Nutrition Site
Lancaster Senior Center	Gloria Parks Community Center
Northwest Buffalo Community Center	Maryvale East Senior Complex (Moorman)
Salvation Army-Tonawanda Branch	Orchard Park Senior Center
Sloan Senior Center	Schiller Park Senior Center
Town of Aurora Senior Center	Tosh Collins Center
Town of Hamburg Senior Center	Town of Evans Senior Center
Town of Tonawanda Senior Center	Town of Marilla
West Seneca Senior Center	United Church Manor

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

You should apply for HEAP early (beginning Oct. 1, 2021), as HEAP funding is limited. HEAP applications are available in large print, if needed, and the HEAP application is also available in several different languages. Requests for large print HEAP applications and HEAP applications in a different language may be made at heaphotline@erie.gov. You may apply online, by mail, by fax, or in person. To apply online for HEAP, visit www.mybenefits.ny.gov. Any supporting documentation may be submitted via NYDocSubmit, a free app that is now available for download on Google play or Apple App Store. Applicants may also email their name and address to Heaphotline@erie.gov and a paper HEAP application will be sent to them via postal mail.

To request a paper application call 716-858-8526 or 716-858-7644 and one will be mailed to you!

Completed HEAP applications with supporting documentation may be mailed to: Erie County Senior Services-NYC/BEC, 95 Franklin Street-room 1303, Buffalo, NY 14202.

Applicants may also fax completed applications with supporting documentation to (716) 858-6765.

HEAP applications may be dropped off at 460 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202, Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm.

Applicants do not need a disconnect notice to be eligible for a regular HEAP benefit. Regular HEAP benefit amounts begin at \$350.

CONSUMER DIRECT HOME CARE

Do you have a loved one you would like to get paid to care for? Do you need help and would like to pay your friend to help you? Would you like a part time job helping people?

Eligibility requirements include:

- Individuals (Care Receivers) who are at least 60 years old and;
- In need of assistance with an Activity of Daily Living or two Instrumental Activities of Daily Living;
- Able to be maintained safely at home; and - Not be eligible for the same services under Medicaid.
- Be capable of making choices regarding their in-home services;
- Be capable of hiring, training, and supervising the in-home services worker; and;
- Understand the impact of their choices, and assume responsibility for the results of these choices, or delegate authority to another who is capable of these tasks.

Call/email us today!
716-858-8526
seniorinfo@erie.gov

COVID-19

The COVID19 Pandemic has been a challenge for all of us. Erie County Senior Services has responded well by doing everything in our power to keep seniors safe and get them vaccinated. Our **Retired Senior Volunteer**

A blue-bordered box containing a telephone handset icon with signal waves, the Erie County Department of Health and Public Health logos, the text "COVID-19 Information Line (716) 858-2929 Foreign language interpreting available", and a dark blue bar with white text: "NEW HOURS: Monday - Friday 8:30AM - 5PM".

COVID-19 Information Line
(716) 858-2929
Foreign language interpreting available

NEW HOURS: Monday - Friday 8:30AM - 5PM

Program partnered with Rite Aid to make sure our seniors and volunteers received their vaccines. We also, took many of our group activities and made them available on our **Combat Social Isolation Web Page** at www.erie.gov/csi, and found numerous other resources to stimulate the mind from home. Currently, while adhering to CDC guidelines, we have reopened (35) of our Congregate Dining sites and that number continues to grow. We even started a **Frozen Congregate Meal Program** in order to help feed our seniors throughout this pandemic. We are continuing to offer these programs while COVID-19 is still a risk and we are dedicated to providing healthy options / services the seniors in our community.

The risk of severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age. This is why CDC recommends that adults 65 years and older are one of the first groups to receive COVID19 vaccines. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is an important step to help prevent getting sick from COVID-19. That said, it might take time before enough vaccines are made for everyone who wants to be vaccinated. You can help protect yourself and the people around you by getting the vaccine.

Even after most of you received the COVID-19 vaccine, you should still: wear a well-fitting mask that covers your nose and mouth when around others, stay at least (6) feet away from others, avoid crowds, avoid poorly ventilated spaces, and wash your hands often.

Scam Alert: If anyone asks you to pay for access to vaccine, you can bet it's a scam. Don't share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you promising access to the vaccine for an extra fee.

IS MEDICARE ALL A JUMBLE TO YOU?



Erie County Department of Senior Services **Health Insurance Information Counselling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)** is here to help you! Call us at 858-7883 to get information: about how Medicare works; how to pick a plan; *how to solve your issue*; **costs of Medicare and programs to help you pay for it.**

Did you know the **Medicare Savings Programs (MSP)** can pay for the Medicare Part B premium and save you \$148.50/mo? The income amounts for 2021 are: \$1,469 for an individual and \$1,980 for a couple. Those with incomes at or below \$1,094/mo. for an individual, or \$1,472/mo. for a married and living together couple, will have their copays paid. The Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) can also reduce your Part D prescription copays from \$3.70 to \$9.20 each, pay any deductible, and reduce your premium up to \$42.27/mo. in 2021. Talk to us about how to use a plan premium to become eligible to apply.

There is a 5* PPO (Preferred Provider Plan) for 2021 that allows an individual to join without being eligible for a special enrollment period. That plan includes dental, vision, hearing, and the option to get in-network coverage anywhere in the U.S. that accepts the plan or pay a higher cost for out-of-network services. This 5* plan can be helpful if an individual needs Medicare Part D for prescriptions and doesn't qualify for an enrollment period. The Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) can remove a late enrollment penalty. Talk to us to get all the details!

Medicare pays for your Covid-2019 shot and it will also pay for a Covid test when medically necessary. Medicare wants to make sure you receive all your preventive tests and screenings to keep you healthy, so check with us to get that list of free tests and services (1-800-633-4227).

Visit our website too: **www2.erie.gov/seniorservices/healthinsurance**

A MATTER OF BALANCE

Many older adults experience a fear of falling. At the Erie County Department of Senior Services, we provide older adults with the opportunity to conquer their fears and challenge their thoughts about falling. **A Matter of Balance (MOB)** is an evidenced-based program that uses practical approaches to help older adults decrease the fear of falling and increase activity levels.



The program is designed to benefit those individuals who:

- Are concerned about falls
- Have fallen in the past
- Restrict activities because of concerns about falling
- Are interested in improving flexibility, balance and strength
- Are 60 years or older and can problem solve

The community classes are run by two trained facilitators for a small group of 8-12 participants. They can be offered both in-person and virtually. The classes run for a period of 8 weeks and are two hours long. Throughout the program, participants achieve significant outcomes. They gain confidence by learning to view falls as controllable, set goals for increasing activity, make changes to reduce fall risk at home, and exercise to increase strength and balance.

Are you interested in learning about the significance of exercise in avoiding falls and practicing exercises to improve strength, coordination, and balance? This course is perfect for you. The curriculum includes group discussion, problem-solving, skill-building, assertiveness training, sharing practical solutions, and exercise training. Participants also conduct a home safety evaluation and learn to get up and down safely. The health outcomes of taking this course include improved falls efficacy, improved falls management, and increased activity and exercise level.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about this course or want to know when the next session will run, can contact **Claire Solak at Claire.solak@erie.gov or 716-858-2320**. We hope to see you at one of our sessions soon!

AGING MASTERY PROGRAM



Aging Mastery Program®

National Council on Aging

Life expectancy has improved substantially in the past 50 years, yet societal expectations of older adults have changed little. The Erie County Department of Senior Services is pleased to offer the **Aging Mastery Program (AMP)** to guide older adults through this life stage. It is an exciting and engaging education and behavior modification incentive program for aging well. AMP is 10-week program covering 10 topics that aid older adults in setting actionable goals, sustainable behaviors, social engagement, and gratitude. The classroom atmosphere is a combination of informative and interactive learning along with group participation.

When individuals graduate from AMP, they have learned about a variety of topics presented by expert speakers such as pharmacists, physical therapist, nutritionist, social workers, financial planners and more. The topics that they will master after completing the courses include exercise, medication management, nutrition, sleep, falls prevention, finances, advance care planning, community engagement, and healthy relationships.

Results have shown that by partaking in the program, participants significantly increase their:

- Social connectedness
- Physical activity levels
- Healthy eating habits
- Use of advanced planning
- Better communication with health care teams



Anyone who is interested in learning more about this course or want to know when the next session will run, can contact **Claire Solak at Claire.solak@erie.gov or 716-858-2320**. We hope to see you at one of our sessions soon!

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CLUB 99

You are never too old and it's never too late to build muscle.

Look out for Erie County Senior Services premier exercise program being held at local senior centers across Erie County. We offer both virtual and in person classes. The in-person class time and dates vary depending on the center. The virtual class is held Monday-Friday from 9am-10am. Classes include resistance band exercises, cardio, stretching and use of small exercise ball. All 60 plus are welcome to join in. The side effects of regular exercise are: improved sleep, increase in blood circulation, improved heart health, increase in confidence, weight loss or maintenance, increased flexibility and overall increase in health and well-being. If you have any questions please contact **Julie Ruzala 858-6403 julie.ruzala@erie.gov**.



CHOOSE HEALTHY WNY AND CHOOSE HEALTHY WITH DIABETES WORKSHOPS

What a crazy 18 months it has been! Everything came to a halt. New and innovative ways of providing services to our senior population had to quickly be discovered and implemented. **The Choose Healthy WNY** Workshops were no exception. These 6-week, evidence based health promotion workshops, usually done in-person, in groups of between 8 and 18 participants, and led by two trained Peer Leaders, had to stop mid-way through some of them, with no apparent way to begin hosting them again. Fortunately, the organization who provides the accreditation for these programs, the Self-Management Resource Center (SMRC), quickly adapted the in-person versions of these workshops into both virtual and telephonic versions, and our community partner, Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative (WNYICC), developed virtual training sessions for all of the current Erie County and other area-wide community agencies' Peer Leaders to take in order to be able to lead these versions of the workshops.

Our first Virtual Choose Healthy WNY workshop began last October and was a great success! Seniors who registered for this workshop had workshop materials dropped

CHOOSE HEALTHY WNY AND CHOOSE HEALTHY WITH DIABETES WORKSHOPS

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off to their homes, and also had a pre-workshop “tech call”, where they would get a call from someone from the Erie County Senior Services Nutrition and Wellness Team to walk them through how to log into the virtual WebEx platform that was used to host the workshops. The workshop sessions ran fairly smoothly, all things considered, and the seniors who participated were grateful to be able to connect with others in this way. Several virtual workshops have been held since then with similar success.

The telephonic “Toolkit” version of the workshop also turned out to be very successful. ‘Toolkit’ refers to the materials that the participant receives prior to the start of the workshop, which guide them through the material that is usually covered in an in-person or virtual workshop. Again, workshop materials were dropped off to participants prior to the start of the workshop, and a “conference-call-style” workshop took place. The telephonic workshop creates a very intimate and motivational experience for the participants, as it is limited to between three and five participants, who can share experiences and goals with one another. The participants in the telephonic workshop all expressed a desire to re-connect with a follow-up phone call within a few months.

The Choose Healthy workshops offer participants the “Tools” that they need to manage their health conditions, which can be found in their “Toolbox” of self-management strategies. The ‘Action Planning’ tool is one of the most powerful and effective tools that is illustrated and utilized each week. Participants are asked to set a **SMART** goal for the coming week, something **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based**, that they can reasonably achieve within the coming week, but it has to be something that they want to do, not something that they have been told to do, or something that they think they should do. It can be anything from cleaning out a closet for 30 minutes on 3 days of the coming week, to reading a book for an hour for 4 days, to going for a walk around the block for 5 days, to drinking 4- 8-ounce glasses of water for 6 days in the coming week. Each week the participants report back on their success with their Action Plans. The combination of specific, short-term goal setting and accountability from their peers is effective and motivating. Many participants report that this is their favorite part of the workshops, along with the camaraderie of their fellow participants. We were so happy to be able to connect with our seniors in these different ways during this unusual time but hopefully soon we will, again, also be able to connect with them face-to-face!

Erie County Stay Fit Dining Program Standard Menu November 2021



Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
1	Cheese Omelet with Peppers, Onions, Tomatoes & Cheese Sauce Tater Tots Raisin Bread Fruit Compote (777)	2 Election Day Boneless Chicken Breast with Gravy Mashed Sweet Potatoes Peas Dinner Roll Cinnamon Pear Crisp (687)	3 Baked Rigatoni with Italian Sausage & Tomato Sauce Broccoli <i>Chef Salad with Dressing</i> Dinner Roll Peach Bavarian (746)	4 Soup & Salad Bean & Ham Soup with Cornbread Carrots <i>Chef Salad with Dressing</i> Pineapple & Mandarin Oranges (651)	5 Teriyaki Seasoned Beef Strips over Rice Oriental Mixed Vegetables Orange-Pineapple Juice Fresh Apple <i>Chocolate Milk</i> (661)	6	7	8	9
8	New Menu Item Ancho Chicken Fajita Skillet with Peppers, Onions, & Salsa Spanish Rice Corn Flour Tortilla Fresh Orange ()	9 Stuffed Shells with Tomato Meat Sauce & Mozzarella Seasoned Spinach & Mushrooms Cauliflower Italian Bread Shortbread Cookies (791)	10 Breaded Bone-in Pork Chop with Gravy Scalloped Potatoes Peas with Red Pepper <i>Chef Salad with Dressing</i> Dinner Roll Cherry Pie with Whipped Topping (1047)	11 No Meals Served No meals served on Veterans Day.	12 Roast Beef with Gravy & Horseradish on a Roll Mashed Potatoes Mixed Vegetables Strawberry Gelatin with Fruit <i>Chocolate Milk</i> (848)	13	14	15	16
15	Ham Steak with Pineapple Topping Sweet Potatoes Creamy Dill Cabbage Whole Wheat Dinner Roll Shortbread Cookies (692)	16 Beef Stew Brussels Sprouts Warm Biscuit Cinnamon Applesauce <i>Chocolate Milk</i> (600)	17 New Menu Item Cheese Tortellini with Chicken & Roasted Red Pepper Sauce Carrots Italian Vegetables Italian Bread Fresh Grapes (519)	18 Entrée Salad Chicken Caesar Salad with Caesar Dressing, Parmesan Cheese, & Croutons Wheat Bread Strawberry Bavarian (848)	19 Stuffed Pepper with Tomato Meat Sauce Mashed Potatoes Broccoli Dinner Roll Fruit Compote (658)	20	21	22	23
22	Polynesian Chicken over White Rice California Blend Vegetables Zucchini & Summer Squash Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Frosting (773)	23 Thanksgiving Meal Turkey with Stuffing & Gravy Mashed Potatoes with Chives Green Bean Casserole Whole Wheat Roll Molded Cranberry Salad Pumpkin Pie with Whipped Topping (1066)	24 Sloppy Joe on a Wheat Bun Cheesy Diced Potatoes Sliced Carrots Fresh Banana <i>Chocolate Milk</i> (835)	25 No Meals Served No meals served on Thanksgiving.	26 Beer Battered Fish with Tartar Sauce & Coleslaw German Potato Salad Mixed Vegetables Cornbread Ambrosia (831)	27	28	29	30
29	Rotini & Meatballs with Tomato Sauce & Mozzarella Cauliflower Seasoned Spinach Fruit Cocktail (701)	30 Breaded Chicken Breast with Buffalo-Style Sauce on a Bun Fiesta Corn Broccoli Tapioca Pudding with Diced Peaches (736)	1 Entrée Salad Tuna Salad with Hard-Boiled Egg on a Bed of Fresh Salad Greens Whole Grain Crackers Fresh Apple <i>Chocolate Milk</i> (711)	2 Beef Stew Mashed Potatoes Biscuit Chocolate Mousse (727)	3 Roast Pork with Warm Cinnamon Apples Mashed Butternut Squash Creamy Dill Cabbage Wheat Bread Frosted Spice Cake (737)	4	5	6	7

ERIE COUNTY RETIRED & SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many volunteers with the Erie County **Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** were able to continue volunteering. Volunteers continued to deliver meals to homebound seniors, transporting Veterans to critical medical appointments, sewing masks for free community distribution, distributing food to economically disrupted families in our community, and more.

And when the Department of Senior Services was able to work with Rite Aid Pharmacies to set up pop-up vaccine clinics, RSVP volunteers made those clinics possible. Dozens of volunteers assisted in the logistics of running clinics, whether through checking in clinic attendees, assisting with paperwork completion, or monitoring recovery areas. Our volunteers came from many different backgrounds, but many were retired medical professionals. At one memorable clinic, we had two retired pharmacists, a retired nurse practitioner, and a retired ECMC trauma nurse on staff.

Ultimately, ten clinics were held between February and June targeting zip codes with the lowest vaccination rates. **Nearly 1,500 people received the vaccine!**

RSVP is set up to provide volunteers when there are emerging issues in our community, and the COVID-19 pandemic brought out the best in our volunteers. As we look towards New York's ongoing reopening, we will continue to face the opportunities in our community with one-time volunteer opportunities and new volunteer placement opportunities.

To join RSVP, or to sign up for our monthly newsletter full of chances to volunteer, email RSVP@erie.gov or call **716-858-7548**.



The all-female team at a Lackawanna vaccine clinic that provided 288 residents with a second-dose of Pfizer. RSVP Volunteers Barb, Wanda, and Melinda are pictured with vaccinators from Rite Aid Pharmacy.

TRANSPORTATION - GOING PLACES

As a service to older adults (aged 60+) in Erie County, in collaboration with community partners, the Department of Senior Services offers the **Going Places Transportation Program**. The curb-to-curb van service is available to seniors who are unable to use conventional means of transportation. *Wheelchair van service may be available upon request – please specify when requesting rides.



New registrants and registered members can call **(716) 858-RIDE** or **(716) 858-7433**: from 8:30am to 4:20pm Monday through Friday.

Schedule health-related trips two weeks ahead of the day of your appointment and schedule non-medical trips one week ahead of the day of your appointment. There is a brief registration that is required for this service.

A suggested contribution is \$3 per one-way trip or \$6 per round-trip; wheelchair service is \$8 per one-way trip or \$16 per round-trip. Contributions are always voluntary. Any amount you wish to give is greatly appreciated and will be used to expand the transportation program!



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term
Services and Supports

of ERIE COUNTY

(800) 342-9871 (716) 858-8526



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