

Food Security

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.



In 2024, food pantries located in New Bremen, Harrisville, Port Leyden, and Copenhagen provided the equivalent of 37,347 meals to families. This is up very slightly over 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 are appreciative of all these efforts!

Copenhagen Food Pantry:

9871 #3 Road, Copenhagen NY 13626

River of Life Fellowship Church

Open: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4-6PM

Harrisville Food Pantry:

14206 South Creek Road, Harrisville NY 13648

Open: 1st Tuesday Each Month 7-8PM

3rd Tuesday Each Month 10-11AM

New Bremen Food Pantry:

8259 State Route 812, Lowville NY 13367

Open: Monday-Friday 9AM-3PM

Port Leyden Food Pantry:

7108 North Street, Port Leyden NY 13433

St. Martin's Rectory

Open: Monday-Friday 8:30-11:30AM

Shelter

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.



Safe and affordable housing can be a challenge for families in poverty. In 2024, LCOI helped over 1,300 families with rental assistance through Housing Choice Vouchers which totaled more than \$11 million in landlord subsidies in Jefferson and Lewis 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

In 2024, 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; these include things such as access ramps, widening doors, and modifying bathrooms. In 2024, we improved the homes of senior citizens through a 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 the Emergency Food and Shelter, administered by United Way Worldwide, the agency assisted many families with these acute needs.



Safety

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.



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.

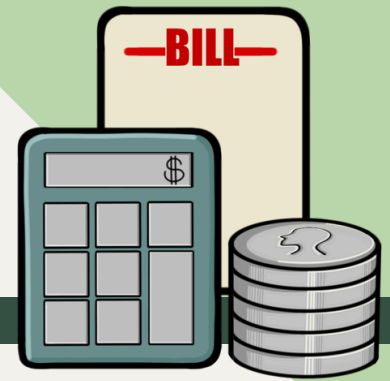
To address victimization, LCOI has a Victim Services program which served 382 people in 2024. Unfortunately, this is a 15% increase over the prior year. Under this program, the agency operates a safe dwelling where families can begin the next chapter in their lives. That safe dwelling provided 677 protected nights during the year, and even 97 nights for pets through our Pet Safe program. Due to the local housing shortages, the length of stay at the safe dwelling was much longer than in prior years; in fact, it was a 70% increase from 2023.

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.

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

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.



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.

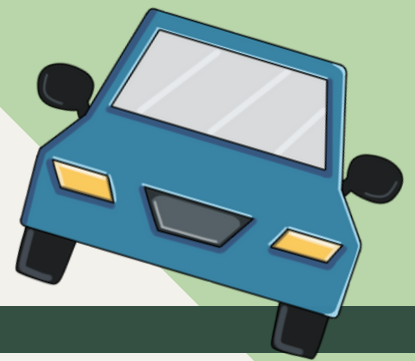
The agency also provided Representative Payee services for 19 people.

Our thrift store, “Opportunity Knocks,” is a great resource for volunteerism and a place to buy gently 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

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.



Unmet critical needs come in many forms: vehicle repairs, monthly car or insurance payments, beds for a child, other household needs, furniture, small appliances, clothing, gas cards, car seats, hygiene products, medical devices, laptops for college-bound students, Beaver Camp scholarships, work clothing for BOCES students, and much more.

In 2024, we helped 94 individuals with \$19,393 in critical needs assistance; this is up 20% from the previous year. Our critical needs are 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 from Kraft-Heinz and Tractor Supply Company, and our own unrestricted revenues from the proceeds of the Opportunity Knocks Thrift Store.

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 2024, provided 62 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.

