



Goals and Objectives 2024 Schenectady County Office of Community Services

Margaret Coker, Behavioral Health Administrator
(margaret.coker@schenectadycountyny.gov)

Goal 1

Goal 1: Title GOAL # 1. Schenectady County will increase the number of available and affordable apartments for the Behavioral Health System

Goal 1: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 1: Description According to the 2023 Rental Housing Market in Schenectady, the average monthly rent for a single apartment is \$1,279. The year-to-year change is up 6.7%. Within the Mental Health System this has caused a dearth of affordable apartments leaving programs struggling to meet their budgets. For a person on SSI, the average income is \$914 per month, and for those on SSD and/or who have part-time employment the income could be up to \$2,000 per month. Usually, rents are often higher than the fair market value. In that case agencies need to use their program funds to supplement the cost.

Goal 1: OASAS? No Goal 1: OMH? Yes Goal 1: OPWDD? Yes

Goal 1: Need Addressed 1 Housing

Goal 1: Need Addressed 2

Goal 1: Need Addressed 3

Goal 1, Objective 1: Title Housing

Goal 1, Objective 1, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 1, Objective 1, Description Objective #1. OCS will await the issuance of RFPs for available housing opportunities per governor Hochul's budget and will encourage current OMH housing agencies to apply for the increase in housing opportunities for Schenectady County.

Goal 1, Objective 2: Title Housing

Goal 1, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 1, Objective 2, Description Objective #2. The Schenectady LGU will provide letters of support for all ESSHI projects submitted to OCS by November of 2024.

Goal 1, Objective 3: Title Housing

Goal 1, Objective 3, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 1, Objective 3, Description . Governor Hochul's budget includes an increase in the number of supportive apartments, (1500) and the creation of many CR's, Step Downs beds etc. Through RFPs issued by OMH per counties or regions, Schenectady County will apply for all opportunities through our non-profit agencies. RFPs have yet to be issued, thus the number of beds cannot be determined at this time.

Goal 1, Objective 4: Title Housing

Goal 1, Objective 4, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 1, Objective 4, Description 100% of available RFPs relevant to the population served by OCS that will fund housing initiatives or increase the availability of affordable apartments will be forwarded to those housing providers that require such funding and encourage such agencies to apply for said RFP.

Goal 2

Goal 2: Title Workforce

Goal 2: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 2: Description . Schenectady County will decrease the number of staff vacancies across the Behavioral Health System agencies.

Goal 2: OASAS? Yes Goal 2: OMH? Yes Goal 2: OPWDD? Yes

Goal 2: Need Addressed 1 Workforce

Goal 2: Need Addressed 2

Goal 2: Need Addressed 3

Goal 2, Objective 1: Title Workforce

Goal 2, Objective 1, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 2, Objective 1, Description Overall, there are approximately 47 staff vacancies across our contracted agencies. The Office of Community Services will monitor all reported staff vacancies through quarterly reports mandated by our office throughout 2024.

Goal 2, Objective 2: Title Workforce

Goal 2, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 2, Objective 2, Description The Office of Community Services will continue to inquire about what efforts are being implemented to recruit and retain staff successfully in their agencies and share this information with other agencies throughout 2024. OCS will share best practice recruitment and retention strategies.

Goal 2, Objective 3: Title Workforce

Goal 2, Objective 3, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 2, Objective 3, Description The Office of Community Services will advocate for funding from Governor Hochul's budget that calls to improve mental health services across the state, including staffing opportunities and a 4% COLA increase, and will distribute all appropriate RFPs to our agencies to this end.

Goal 3

Goal 3: Title Crisis Services

Goal 3: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 3: Description Goal #3. Schenectady County will work with agencies that provide crisis services and assist with improving outcomes.

Goal 3: OASAS? Yes Goal 3: OMH? Yes Goal 3: OPWDD? Yes

Goal 3: Need Addressed 1 Crisis Services

Goal 3: Need Addressed 2

Goal 3: Need Addressed 3

Goal 3, Objective 1: Title Crisis Services

Goal 3, Objective 1, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 3, Objective 1, Description While Schenectady County has had Mobile Crisis services through Northern Rivers for the past few years, the initial plan to develop this service resulted in creating a Regional service covering 5 counties in the Capital Region. Due to this, the response time is not always able handle the immediate needs for crisis management. The Office of Community Services will advocate to have separate units in each county through its monthly meetings with the HRFO.

Goal 3, Objective 2: Title Crisis Services

Goal 3, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 3, Objective 2, Description OCS will also ask the CLMHD to put this issue on their legislative docket to advocate for improved crisis services through the Legislature in 2024.

Goal 3, Objective 3: Title Crisis Services

Goal 3, Objective 3, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 3, Objective 3, Description OCS has developed a working relationship with the Schenectady Police Department, as well as participating in CIT to improve police interactions with persons with a mental illness or substance use disorder. Positive interactions and outcomes will be documented throughout 2024.

Goal 3, Objective 4: Title Crisis Services

Goal 3, Objective 4, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 3, Objective 4, Description Due to the lack of staffing and the closure of inpatient beds, the Crisis Unit at Ellis Medicine has been overwhelmed with persons presenting themselves to the ED, and subsequently to the Crisis Unit. Often there is no room in the unit to hold people, so if they are stabilized even for a short period of time, they will be discharged. Similarly, because of bed closures, the crisis unit is then not able to transfer persons to the inpatient units. Staffing shortages and worsening mental health conditions in the community exacerbate this issue. In 2024 Governor Hochul's plan is to monitor and enforce agreements with Article 28 hospitals to open beds as outlined in their operating certificates. There have also been many discharges from the Crisis Unit when it is believed that the discharge is not appropriate. OCS will monitor Crisis discharges and perform quality assurance reviews on appropriate cases.

Goal 4

Goal 4: Title Cross Systems Services

Goal 4: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 4: Description The Office of Community Services will look for opportunities designed to improve cross systems services.

Goal 4: OASAS? Yes Goal 4: OMH? Yes Goal 4: OPWDD? Yes

Goal 4: Need Addressed 1 Cross System Services

Goal 4: Need Addressed 2

Goal 4: Need Addressed 3

Goal 4, Objective 1: Title Cross Systems Services

Goal 4, Objective 1, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 4, Objective 1, Description High need high acuity clients who are dually or triply diagnosed across systems often do not get their needs met and fall through the cracks as individual systems do not take ownership for their care and cross systems collaborations do not always work due to the belief that the individual is in the wrong system. Schenectady OCS will advocate with the CLMHD to close these system gaps and encourage the development of services for these individuals with complex care needs.

Goal 4, Objective 2: Title Cross Systems Services

Goal 4, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2024

Goal 4, Objective 2, Description The Office of Community Service will assist in facilitating solutions on a case-by- case basis and directly include and appeal to OASAS, OMH and OPWDD to successfully resolve such conflicts as they arise throughout 2024.

Goal 4, Objective 3: Title Crisis Services

Goal 4, Objective 3, Target Completion Date

Goal 4, Objective 3, Description Schenectady County has always had excellent collaboration with non-profit agencies. OCS will continue to include all mental health and substance use agencies through established meetings to continue to work together and problem solve any issues that arise in the community.



Office of Addiction
Services and Supports

Office of
Mental Health

Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities

2024 Needs Assessment Form Schenectady County Office of Community Services

Case Management/Care Coordination Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): The survey of our agencies indicated that this is a need, but it not score in the top four.

Crisis Services Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? Yes

Need description (Optional):

Cross System Services Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? Yes

Need description (Optional):

Housing Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? Yes

Need description (Optional):

Inpatient Treatment Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): While the survey indicated that this is a need, it not score in the top four

Non-Clinical Supports Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): The survey of providers indicated that it is a need, but not score in the top four

Outpatient Treatment Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): Again, the survey of our providers indicated that this is a need, but not in the highest priority.

Residential Treatment Services Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? No

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): The survey of our providers did not indicate that it is a top four priority

Respite Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): The survey of our providers did not indicate that it is a top four priority

Transition Age Services Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Youth Only

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): The survey of our providers did not indicate that it is a top four priority

Transportation Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? No

Need description (Optional): The survey of our providers did not indicate that it is a top four priority

Workforce Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Do any of the Goals on the Goals and Objectives Form address this need? Yes

Need description (Optional):

LGU Representative: Margaret Coker

Submitted for: Schenectady County Office of Community Services

County Plan for Schenectady County

Demographics of the Population Served (2023)

Schenectady County, geographically, is the second smallest county in Upstate New York. In 2023 the population was estimated to be 160,093, an 8% increase from the previous year, and was the Capital Region's most urban county. According to the 'World Population Review 2023,' Schenectady County's population is 56.52% white, and 42% non-white individuals. The most racially diverse area is the City of Schenectady itself. The population in the City of Schenectady is 67,212. There was a 70% response rate for the Racial Equity Survey. All agencies reported that they could benefit from more support and training about this topic.

The poverty rate in the city of Schenectady is 22.74%. Education plays a significant role in determining the poverty rate. For example, those who have less than a 9th grade education is within a 31.57% rate of poverty, those with some college 26.05%, with a high school degree 15.15%, and those with a bachelor's degree or greater have a 6.72% poverty rate. The overall poverty rate for the County is 12.9%.

According to the Department of Labor, in 2023 the unemployment rate stood at 4.3%, down from the 5% rate 12 months earlier. 1,300 residents in the city itself were unemployed, down 200 from a year prior.

The median household income for the County from 2017-2021 was \$69,891. According to the United States Census Bureau, the per capita income in the last 12 months of 2021 was \$35,747.

Mental Health Services

Within the Community Health Assessment between the years 2022-2024 two priorities were named. The first was to Prevent Communicable Diseases and the second was to Promote Well-Being and Prevent Mental and Substance Use Disorders. The rate for hospitalizations for mental health disorders as a primary diagnosis was 166.2 per 10,000 for black residents, and 99.0 for white residents. The federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has designated the city of Schenectady as a Health Professional Shortage Area for primary care, mental health, and dental care for the Medicaid eligible populations. Additionally, Schenectady County has been designated a Medically Underserved Area for the homebound population.

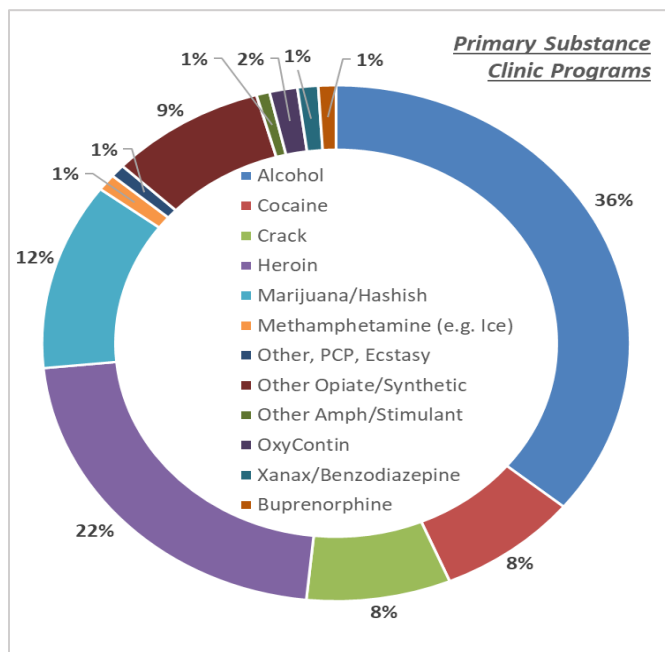
During the period of 2014-2018, Schenectady County had the region's highest rates of age adjusted ED visits (239.5/10,000) and hospitalizations (108.1/10,000) due to mental health disorders being the primary diagnosis, both rates are about 50% higher than NYS, excluding NYC. The age-adjusted suicide mortality rate of 7.5 per 100,000, slightly lower than NYS at 8.1.

The County also had the region's highest 2014-18 age adjusted rate of hospitalizations 5.3/10,000 and the second highest ED visits (9.8/10,000) due to self-inflicted injuries, both 61-74% higher than NYS, excluding NYC. Overall, in 2021, the age adjusted percentage of adults

reporting frequent mental distress was 13.0%, higher than that of NYS, excluding NYC. More recent data is not readily available.

Substance Use

In 2022 Schenectady County, much like Albany County, was designated as a federal High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. In 2020 there were 28 opioid related deaths, in 2021 there were 44 deaths by overdose, and in the beginning of 2022 20 individuals died of an overdose, on the same trajectory of previous years. Making matters worse are the deadly additives laced into heroin.. In 2022 there were 57 overdose cases in the county related to fentanyl and 7 confirmed cases tied to a combination of fentanyl and Xylazine. Since substance use is so prevalent in the city, efforts are being made to help those who are addicted to substances. The ‘Schenectady Cares’ program, sponsored by the Police Department continues to expand and now includes the Schenectady County Outreach HUB as a phase of their program. The Schenectady County Opioid Overdose Prevention Program distributes Naloxone throughout the county and Narcan trainings are held throughout the city. The Substance Use Coalition meets regularly. One of the largest Substance Use clinic providers in Schenectady County, New Choices Recovery Center, monitors the prevalence of substance use for those being treated in their program as seen below



While Alcohol is the leading percentage of substance use at 36%, heroin use is also significant at 22%.

In addition to the above efforts, the city of Schenectady has adopted a new model of assisting community members not only have a substance use addiction, but also mental health challenges, many of whom are homeless. The program called 'Outreach HUB' began early in 2023 and thus far has had many successes. See the article published by the Times Union newspaper on June 20th, 2023. The outcomes of this model have proven to be successful. Out of 39 residents 8 received medical treatment, 10 housing referrals, 22 case management, 12 substance use, 7 mental health, 11 TA benefits, 12 Food stamps, 11 Peer services and 16 received emergency housing.

Housing

According to the 2023 Rental Housing Market in Schenectady, the average monthly rent for a single apartment is \$1,279. The year-to-year change is up 6.7%. Within the Mental Health System this has caused a dearth of affordable apartments leaving programs struggling to meet their budgets. For a person on SSI, the average income is \$914 per month, and for those on SSD and/or who have part-time employment the income could be up to \$2,000 per month. Usually, rents are often higher than the fair market value. In that case agencies need to use their program funds to supplement the cost. Within the supported housing programs clients are required to pay 30% of their income towards rent. While housing programs more recently have found some 1-bedroom apartments, they do not have the same quality as in the past. Even with the addition of ESSHI projects, there are not enough apartments to meet the need because they are filled within a short period of time. Much of the construction of new apartments in the city are luxury apartments, for example, near the Rivers' Casino there are many of these. The wait lists for Supportive apartments in the Mental Health System at the end of 2022 was 220, and for Community Residents there were 12 individuals waiting. Governor Hotel's planned budget for the mental health system and housing, when carried out, will hopefully alleviate some of this shortage of safe and affordable housing.

Staffing: As of the fourth quarter of 2022 there were approximately 47 staff vacancies across the Schenectady Mental Health System, 10 of whom were clinical Social Workers. The most significant staffing shortage was at Ellis Medicine, our primary provider of clinical services. Thus, over the past 2 years there were many beds offline in the inpatient unit and numerous diversions. However, this situation is not much different from other counties in the State. Staffing shortages per agency that serve persons with mental illness and co-occurring disorders follow:

- Ellis Inpatient: 8 RN's and MHA's
- Ellis OP Clinic: 4 SW's, 1 RN, 1 MD
- Ellis Crisis Unit: 2 SW's
- Ellis PROS: 1 Nutritionist, 1 Intake Specialist, 1 SW Supervisor
- Northeast: 1 School Based SW
- RSS: 1 SW, 2 HH CM's
- YMCA: 1 SW

- Mohawk: Dominion House: 2 overnight residential counselors, 1 daytime residential counselor, 1 assistant program director, and 1 client service coordinator
- Mohawk: ACT 1 RN
- New Choices: Perrin House 1, Smith House 1, Bridge Center 1
- Bethesda House: 11 House Staff, 1 CM, 1 HR manager, 1 SW

MHANYs will advocate for an 8.5 % cola increase for funding for our mental health and human services workforce.

Of the 20 non-profit agencies there was a 70% rate of response to the needs assessment survey, the main priorities were identified. The results are the following:

1. Housing
2. Workforce
3. Crisis Services
4. Cross Systems Services

*Outpatient and Inpatient Services were also an agreed upon need as well as Case Management services.