



Short-term Help for Families in Need

Emergency & Family Services

Our Emergency and Family Services Department provides short-term assistance to individuals and families during an emergency or crisis that threatens their ability to maintain basic needs – food, clothing, and shelter.

The division provides information, referrals and financial assistance (based on budget available) to eligible households, following an assessment and in accordance with our emergency assistance guidelines.

Emergency Services Mobile Food Pantry Program

In an effort to broaden the reach of our nutrition assistance initiative, Emergency and Family Services launched a Mobile Food Pantry program with pop up sites across rural areas in the region. The mission is to provide easy access to programs and services within the most impoverished and underserved communities. Each family is allowed to utilize the mobile food pantry program once in a 30 day period and is provided with a 3-5 day supply of nutritious food items.

Nutrition Assistance Programs

The Nutrition Assistance program has been providing Buffalo families and individuals in need access to nutritious food items for more than 30 years. Our main food pantry is now located at 167 W. Humboldt Parkway inside of the BMHA LBJ Senior Apartments. Mobile pantry sites are located at the Lackawanna Municipal Housing Authority Resource Center in Lackawanna and the JFK Community Center in Buffalo.

Community Action Angels

The Community Action Angels Program is dedicated to assisting meeting the needs of the low income and the disadvantaged population by providing volunteers that will bring to this agency resource from the community to meet those needs. The Community Action Angels program sponsors several year round community initiatives including: Holiday Toy Assistance, Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway, School Supply/Backpack Giveaway, Project Warmth (hat, scarf & glove drive), Holiday Food Boxes, Haircuts for Kids and Child ID Kit Events.

Emergency Food Delivery Program

This program was launched to assist low-income seniors and disabled individuals by obtaining the nutritious food items that they need to sustain themselves.

Once a month, our Emergency Food Delivery Program staff delivers a bag of groceries to home-bound and disabled individuals who are unable to visit a food pantry in their community. A note from a doctor may be required before a delivery schedule is set up. This program is essentially designed for clients who are able to prepare their own meals but lack the mobility to utilize a traditional food pantry. Each client is provided about a 3 day supply of food. The majority of the clients enrolled in this program are referred by one of our partnering agencies.

Volunteer Income Tax Preparation (VITA)

VITA is a free service that is offered during each annual tax season to assist low and moderate-income individuals and families with free tax preparation.

VITA services include free Federal, State, IT-214 and Earned Income Tax Credit preparation. Individuals and families with an annual household income of \$52,000 or less are income eligible. Your taxes can be electronically filed and the refund transferred right into your bank account. If you do not have a bank account, an Emergency and Family Services staff member can assist you with opening an account. Your refund may also be mailed to your home address.

Baby Needs Pantry

Caring for a new addition can be stressful and costly. Some parents face having to choose between diapers and other basic needs like food. With the help of the Food Bank of WNY, our Baby Needs Pantry is designed to assist low-income families with baby formula, baby food, diapers and other basic necessities (subject to availability). Families may visit once in a 30 day period.

Household Establishment Program

Families who have experienced an extreme crisis such as a house fire or a natural disaster or who are relocating from a transitional housing program may be eligible for the Household Establishment program. This program assists with furniture, appliances and/or basic household items.

Emergency Preparedness Training

Do you know what to do to help keep your family safe in an emergency? Would you know what supplies you need in case the power goes out or what documents you should have on hand if you need to evacuate your home? CAO collaborates with the Greater Buffalo Area Red Cross Chapter and the NYS Citizen Preparedness Corps to educate community residents, youth, seniors, parents, block clubs and faith based organizations on the three basic rules of emergency preparedness - making a plan, preparing a kit and staying informed.

Crisis Services/Case Management

Our team of credentialed Family Development staff works closely with our customers to help them towards the goal of self-sufficiency. Each family is screened to determine eligibility for other CAO services or programs as well as services offered through our partner agencies. These services include, but are not limited to: medical insurance assistance, prescription assistance, HEAP, food stamps (SNAP), day care, WIC, Unclaimed Funds, flu shots, employment assistance, dental health, medical screenings, mental health assessment, and emergency home repair assistance.

CAO offers assistance with applying for programs and services including: SNAP, HEAP, Weatherization, WIC, Daycare, TNAF, Temporary Assistance, School Meals, Unemployment Insurance and Health Insurance.

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