



Office of Addiction
Services and Supports

Office of
Mental Health

Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities

Goals and Objectives 2024-2027 Columbia County Department of Human Services

Melissa Scheriff, Planner/Contract Manager
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Goal 1

Goal 1: Title Additional safe, affordable housing options will be created for all specialty populations

Goal 1: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2027

Goal 1: Description Like other rural New York State Counties, Columbia County has a long history of a lack of affordable housing options. The housing landscape of Columbia County has, and continues to be, greatly influenced by the pandemic. The County has also experienced changes in demographics and the economy, which is similar to the changes in the surrounding Counties and in New York State. In the simplest terms, there is a lack of and an imbalance in the housing supply and the housing needs of the residents are not being met.

Columbia County is very rural in nature and as in many rural counties, especially with limited infrastructure including water, sewer, and broadband, the development of new housing, specifically multi-family and affordable housing is very difficult. Furthermore, rural counties tend to have an older housing stock. According to the CEDC's 2022 Housing Brief, 54% of the housing stock in Columbia County is over 50 years old and 31% was built prior to 1940.

Other impediments and barriers to the development of affordable housing include community opposition, the cost of development, regulatory restrictions, lack of suitable federal, state and local financial incentives and grants, and the increasing expense associated with housing development.

Despite the significant challenges and barriers to increasing Columbia County's affordable housing stock, there is opportunity to improve upon the current housing landscape. More specifically, we have identified the goal of developing safe, affordable housing options for all specialty populations in Columbia County by:

1. Assisting Twin County Recovery Services (the only OASAS-licensed treatment provider in Columbia County) with the planned relocation and expansion of their Residential program;
2. Exploring partnership opportunities with Oxford House, Inc. to bring recovery-focused, peer-led housing to Columbia County;
3. Partnering with local housing experts to continue to advance the creation of a 'Wellness Hub';
4. Strengthening partnerships with the City of Hudson and Columbia County Housing Committees, along with other housing-focused grassroots groups, to work more efficiently and avoid duplication of efforts in this area.

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

Goal 1: Need Addressed 1 Housing

Goal 1: Need Addressed 2

Goal 1: Need Addressed 3

Goal 1, Objective 1: Title Assist local OASAS-licensed outpatient treatment program in moving and expanding their current residential program.

Goal 1, Objective 1, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2025

Goal 1, Objective 1, Description In order to accommodate the growing SUD needs in Columbia County, Twin County Recovery Services (TCRS) is planning to relocate and expand their current Red Door Community Residence. This move would increase capacity from thirteen (13) to twenty (20) beds. Though this project has been underway for many years, it has recently gained momentum and we will work collaboratively with them in the coming year to see the project to fruition.

Goal 1, Objective 2: Title Explore potential partnership with Oxford House, Inc. to provide recovery-focused, peer-led housing.

Goal 1, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2025

Goal 1, Objective 2, Description In early 2023, the Director of Community Services (DCS) and Community Services Board (CSB) met with representatives from Oxford House, Inc.--a nationally-known nonprofit organization that assists in the creation of housing for individuals in SUD recovery. The concept, which has proven to be evidence-based, describes a democratically-run, self-supporting and drug free home. Oxford Houses local to the Columbia County area can be found in both Albany and Orange Counties and Dutchess County is currently in the process of creating one as well. Both the DCS and members of the CSB are in agreement that this housing model is needed in Columbia County, which currently lacks a step-down program for individuals who are ready to leave the OASAS-licensed Residential program, but not quite ready to go home.

In the coming year, we will focus on identifying funding to create one Oxford House in Columbia County. We will also work with the County Board of Supervisors and local housing experts to identify an available structure by the end of 2025.

Goal 1, Objective 3: Title Partner with local housing experts to advance the creation of a 'Wellness Hub'

Goal 1, Objective 3, Target Completion Date Sep 30, 2025

Goal 1, Objective 3, Description For the past two years, local stakeholders in Columbia County have been meeting to devise a plan to change the way homelessness, addiction and mental illness are treated in the County. These meetings culminated in the decision to create a 'one-stop shop' for residents in crisis, and/or those seeking homeless housing, mental health and/or substance use treatment. Currently dubbed 'the Wellness Hub', this yet-to-be developed 'hub' will address persistent problems faced by the County while helping those going through crises, as well as taking pressure off local police and the emergency room thereby decreasing costs.

To date, a 5-acre parcel of land, centrally located in the Town of Greenport, has been donated to house the Wellness Hub. Additionally, building plans have been drafted and a Project Coordinator has been hired to identify and secure funding for the Wellness Hub and facilitate the ongoing work of the Wellness Hub workgroup.

In the coming years, efforts will be made to partner with local housing experts (i.e. RUPCO, etc) to advance the creation of the Wellness Hub.

Goal 1, Objective 4: Title Strengthen partnerships with City of Hudson and Columbia County Housing Committees, along with other housing-focused groups, to work more efficiently and avoid duplication of efforts.

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

Goal 1, Objective 4, Description

Goal 2

Goal 2: Title Access to behavioral health services will be improved through increased awareness of local resources.

Goal 2: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2027

Goal 2: Description Though Columbia County is a small, rural County with limited behavioral health resources, a common theme that has emerged in public forums over the past few years is the general public's lack of understanding about how to access the specific resource they're looking for at any given time. Several attempts to address this have been made (i.e. a hard copy resource list was created, creation of a mobile app was explored, etc.), but none of these have offered the permanent solution we're looking for.

In the coming years, we will create and publicize a 'front-door' for behavioral health services. Though it's unclear at this time what form this will take, some suggestions that have been proposed include an electronic database or creation of a position dedicated to this task.

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

Goal 2: Need Addressed 1 Other

Goal 2: Need Addressed 2 Cross System Services

Goal 2: Need Addressed 3

Goal 2, Objective 1: Title Create a comprehensive, updated workable list of all local behavioral health resources.

Goal 2, Objective 1, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2025

Goal 2, Objective 1, Description

Goal 2, Objective 2: Title Identify an agency, or establish a position, to act as the information and referral center for all local behavioral health services.

Goal 2, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2025

Goal 2, Objective 2, Description

Goal 2, Objective 3: Title Explore regional resources and identify potential partnerships.

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

Goal 2, Objective 3, Description Several regional resource and referral initiatives have been introduced recently which are expected to include Columbia County (i.e. United Way, 9-8-8). We will identify what assistance is being offered to Columbia County residents through these services and explore potential partnership opportunities.

Goal 3

Goal 3: Title Services and resources for individuals with IDD will be strengthened.

Goal 3: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2027

Goal 3: Description According to OPWDD Medicaid Data, 512 individuals in Columbia County received Medicaid services and payments totaling \$42,658,474 in 2021. Despite the high Medicaid expenditures, services for individuals with IDD are limited in Columbia County. Staffing shortages continue to be prevalent in this field, specifically among the DSP staff, where wages often do not reflect the intensity of the work. In addition to advocating for increased wages in the IDD workforce and collaborating with the local community college to increase educational and advancement opportunities for staff, Columbia County is committing to re-launching the Think Differently initiative. Through a combination of these efforts, we will

strengthen and services and resources for individuals with IDD in our County.

Goal 3: OASAS? No Goal 3: OMH? No Goal 3: OPWDD? Yes

Goal 3: Need Addressed 1 Other

Goal 3: Need Addressed 2

Goal 3: Need Addressed 3

Goal 3, Objective 1: Title Work collaboratively with Columbia County government and other agencies to re-launch the Think Differently initiative

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

Goal 3, Objective 1, Description

Goal 3, Objective 2: Title Continue to explore credentialing programs to upskill the direct care workforce

Goal 3, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2025

Goal 3, Objective 2, Description

Goal 4

Goal 4: Title Creative ways to recruit and retain staff and/or maintain service provision with current staffing levels will be identified.

Goal 4: Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2027

Goal 4: Description Though Columbia County has one of the lowest unemployment rates in NYS (~4%), significant workforce shortages continue to be reported across the continuum of care in all three disability areas. These shortages can be tracked to both declining birth rates and migrational trends. Recent labor statistics from the Columbia Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) show that from 2010-2020, 35% of Columbia County residents (ages 0-18) left the area. During these same years, the County's population over age 65 increased by 32%. In 2021, there were only ~500 seniors in all six Columbia County school districts combined, a number that has significantly and consistently decreased in recent years.

In addition, lack of affordable housing, public transportation, and affordable childcare continue to be the primary barriers to working in Columbia County.

Local labor experts suggest that areas of focus for providers include retention of staff, advocacy for higher wages, and collaboration among agencies.

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

Goal 4: Need Addressed 1 Workforce

Goal 4: Need Addressed 2

Goal 4: Need Addressed 3

Goal 4, Objective 1: Title Advocate at the state and local levels for increased wages for behavioral health workforce

Goal 4, Objective 1, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2026

Goal 4, Objective 1, Description

Goal 4, Objective 2: Title Examine opportunities for agency collaboration to provide services with current staffing levels

Goal 4, Objective 2, Target Completion Date Dec 31, 2025

Goal 4, Objective 2, Description

Goal 4, Objective 3: Title Establish and share recruitment and retention best practices among local behavioral health providers

Goal 4, Objective 3, Target Completion Date

Goal 4, Objective 3, Description



Update to 2024-2027 Goals and Objectives Columbia County Department of Human Services

Melissa Scheriff, Planner/Contract Manager
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Goal 1

Title	Additional safe, affordable housing options will be created for all specialty populations	
Update	Though identifying and securing safe, affordable housing continues to be a challenge, much progress has been made in the past year. Twin County Recovery Services, our County's only OASAS-licensed outpatient substance use treatment program, continues to make progress to relocate their Men's Residence (The Red Door). The new location will be able to accommodate an increased number of beds. Additionally, development of a 'Wellness Hub' is progressing at a consistent pace. The 'Hub', which will consist of a homeless shelter, supported housing--and eventually a triage welcome center--will be developed on a 5-acre parcel of land that has been donated specifically for this purpose. A full-time Wellness Hub Coordinator has been retained to identify potential sources of funding, facilitate partnerships and ensure that progress continues. Most recently, RUPCO, which has led the development of many successful housing developments in our area, has agreed to partner with the County on the project. The extensive knowledge, skills and experience that they bring to the team cannot be overstated. Columbia County has also made progress to provide recovery-focused housing for individuals who struggle with substance use disorder. Columbia and Greene Counties have each committed funding to establish an Oxford House in each County. In its simplest form, an Oxford House describes a democratically run, self-supporting and drug free home. Each house represents a remarkably effective and low cost method of preventing relapse by providing a safe, affordable option for individuals transitioning between inpatient and outpatient treatment or simply for those who need to be in a sober living environment. Columbia and Greene Counties are in the process of executing contracts with Oxford House, with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2024. Finally, we continue to facilitate and strengthen partnerships that increase residents' access to safe, affordable housing. The Columbia-Greene Housing Coalition continues to be an active coalition that strives to improve the housing situation for all residents. Recently, Gateway Hudson Valley was awarded funding from OMH to provide 10 housing units in both Columbia and Greene Counties. An introductory meeting has already taken place and commitments have been made to work collaboratively to ensure that Gateway's foray into the County is successful.	
OBJECTIVES		
Assist local OASAS-licensed outpatient treatment program in moving and expanding their current residential program.		Ongoing
Explore potential partnership with Oxford House, Inc. to provide recovery-focused, peer-led housing.		Complete
Partner with local housing experts to advance the creation of a 'Wellness Hub'		Ongoing
Strengthen partnerships with City of Hudson and Columbia County Housing Committees, along with other housing-focused groups, to work more efficiently and avoid duplication of efforts.		Ongoing
OBJECTIVE UPDATES		

Goal 2

Title	Access to behavioral health services will be improved through increased awareness of local resources.	
Update	Despite many attempts--and exhaustive efforts-- to increase awareness of, and access to, behavioral health services, we have been unsuccessful to date. However, recently there is some progress to report. Throughout 2023, community forums were held throughout the County to discuss the opioid epidemic, its impact in the County and, more generally, what resources and services are available (and, more importantly, NOT available) to address the issue. These forums provided valuable information about the public's level of awareness of local programs, resources, and services. It became apparent immediately that the majority of people could discuss the enormity of the addiction epidemic and its effect on their community, but there is a general lack of understanding about how to access the behavioral health system. After much discussion, it has been decided that the Columbia County Department of Human Services/Mental Health Center will act as the 'front door' for all calls regarding mental health and/or substance use. This is a recent decision, so many details have yet to be established. However, it has been determined that the Mental Health Center's crisis team will be tasked with taking the calls and referring the individual to the appropriate agency for services. Simultaneously, an updated list of local resources will be created to increase the crisis team's ability to appropriately handle each call. It has not yet been determined whether this will be a hard copy or an electronic version. Finally, it's important to note that, while regional services, such as United Way's 211 system, have been explored, it has been determined that they are not the best option for our small, rural County. The Call Centers are often located in a different part of New York State and they are only aware of the programs and services that we make them aware of. Things change quickly and constantly and it is almost impossible to keep these centers notified of every critical change in services.	
OBJECTIVES		
Create a comprehensive, updated workable list of all local behavioral health resources.		Ongoing
Identify an agency, or establish a position, to act as the information and referral center for all local behavioral health services.		Ongoing

Explore regional resources and identify potential partnerships.	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE UPDATES	

Goal 3	
Title	Services and resources for individuals with IDD will be strengthened.
Update	Columbia County continues to increase efforts to better serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. In the past year, Columbia County has partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia & Greene Counties (CCE) and the Andersen Center for Autism to launch the Think Differently Initiative. CCE has hosted workshops to introduce the community to Think Differently. They've also hosted events, including: a sensory-friendly space at the Columbia County Fair, sensory-sensitive movie screenings and, most recently, a sensory-friendly 'meet-an-animal' program. They're currently developing a cooking/nutrition program geared towards neuro diverse individuals. While Columbia County continues to explore new and better ways to serve the IDD population, it has been decided that Objective #2 is no longer a reasonable expectation for the Local Services Plan. OPWDD is partnering with the SUNY system to offer credentialing programs and classes at community colleges throughout New York State. Though representatives of Columbia-Greene Community College (CGCC), our local community college, have met with SUNY representatives, CGCC has not been able to launch this program. However, we are pleased to note that Coarc is participating in the NADSP's e-badge program to elevate their Direct Support Professionals. Finally, the Community Services Board (CSB) remains committed to surveying the landscape of services provided to individuals with IDD, highlighting successes and identifying and addressing gaps. The CSB also recently welcomed the new CEO of Coarc as a new Board member and this has already shifted the discussions to be more inclusive of that sector.
OBJECTIVES	
Work collaboratively with Columbia County government and other agencies to re-launch the Think Differently initiative	Ongoing
Continue to explore credentialing programs to upskill the direct care workforce	N/A
OBJECTIVE UPDATES	

Goal 4	
Title	Creative ways to recruit and retain staff and/or maintain service provision with current staffing levels will be identified.
Update	The recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce continues to be the challenge of our times. Despite the enormity of this challenge, there is progress to note. At this time, the Columbia County Mental Health Center is (almost) fully staffed--something that could not have been imagined a year or two ago. Though it is tempting to claim that this is the result of some new and unique recruiting efforts, that is simply not true. Instead, we've experienced slow, steady progress by relying on tried-and-true recruitment methods (i.e. advertising, recruiting interns, word of mouth). The Healthcare Worker Bonus and COLAs have undoubtedly assisted with recruitment as well. The importance of retaining staff has never been higher. Agencies, including the Columbia County Mental Health Center, continue to be as flexible as possible to offer staff the best possible working environment--offering a condensed work week, flexible hours, etc. as allowed. Behavioral health provider agencies in Columbia County continue to explore opportunities for collaboration whenever possible to maintain high quality care. A recent example involves the Mobile Crisis Assessment Team (MCAT), a program of the Mental Health Association of Columbia & Greene Counties. MCAT continues to struggle with staffing shortages that impact their ability to handle telephone calls during specific hours. Upon learning of this, the Columbia County Mental Health Center offered to take crisis calls during those hours. Finally, the CSB and Subcommittees continue to focus on workforce retention and recruitment strategies. Workforce experts have served as guest speakers for several meetings and provider agencies regularly share recruitment and retention successes and failures.
OBJECTIVES	
Advocate at the state and local levels for increased wages for behavioral health workforce	Ongoing
Examine opportunities for agency collaboration to provide services with current staffing levels	Ongoing
Establish and share recruitment and retention best practices among local behavioral health providers	Ongoing
OBJECTIVE UPDATES	



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2026 Update to 2024-2027 Goals and Objectives Columbia County Department of Human Services

Melissa Scheriff, Planner/Contract Manager
(melissa.scheriff@columbiacountyny.com)

Goal 1

Goal 1, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 1, 2026 Status Update Description: Though housing continues to be a challenge in Columbia County, we are pleased to report that progress has been made toward this goal. Please see descriptions under each objective for additional information.

Goal 1 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 1 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update Description: The effort to expand and relocate Twin County Recovery Services' (TCRS) Red Door residence continues. Property has been identified and secured and the LGU submitted its formal support and approval of the project via the NYS ECON platform.

Goal 1 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update: Complete

Goal 1 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update Description: With support from the Columbia County Board of Supervisors and funding from the Opioid Settlement Fund, an 8-bed Oxford House men's residence was successfully opened in Hudson, NY in November 2024. The Oxford House model provides a community-based, supportive and sober living environment for individuals in recovery. All residents must maintain an income and actively participate in the functioning of the house. In addition, Oxford House provides an Outreach Worker to liaison with community provider agencies and to manage the house according to Oxford House protocol. Support and funding for this house is expected to continue.

Goal 1 Objective 3, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 1 Objective 3, 2026 Status Update Description: Columbia County, RUPCO, Greenberger Center and Gateway Hudson Valley are continuing work on bringing the vision of the Wellness Hub to life. Most recently, a stakeholder meeting was held on March 12th to discuss the finer points of each space. Key topics that came up include: layout of the campus and building placement on the 5 acres, managing the different construction timelines as they apply to the shelter, and permanent housing versus the STTR which has to follow a separate process through OMH. Environmental surveys on the identified land have been completed and discussions continue around sustainability of the Welcome Center and staffing structures. A promotional video has been created to provide a visual of the proposal, which can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSQkZ7ACTUs>

Goal 1 Objective 4, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 1 Objective 4, 2026 Status Update Description: Strengthening partnerships with the various entities working to bring safe, affordable housing to Columbia County continues. The Community Services Board welcomed the Mayor and Housing Chair of the City of Hudson (the largest municipality in Columbia county) to outline their work in the housing field. This was a good way to continue the housing discussion. Additionally, the DCS and/or County Planner regularly participate in meetings of the Columbia-Greene Housing Coalition and are kept informed of the status of various projects through those meetings. Despite these efforts, there is still work to be done on this objective. It has been challenging to identify and communicate with all of the private entities that are working on housing issues in Columbia County. This will remain a priority for the coming year.

Goal 2

Goal 2, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 2, 2026 Status Update Description: Despite the fact that increasing access to local behavioral health resources has been a priority in Columbia County for many years, little progress had been made. While previous attempts to mitigate this challenge--creating an app, identifying an agency to act as a resource line, creating a directory of resources--were noble, none of them were successful or sustainable. However, in early 2025, the Columbia County Dual Recovery Coordinator was able to create an electronic resource guide that, we believe, will help us reach this goal. Additionally, Columbia County has chosen Columbia County Pathways to Recovery, a local nonprofit with an existing warm line in place, to be the entity responsible for answering calls from the community in regards to behavioral health resources and services. Please see descriptions under each objective for more information.

Goal 2 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update: Complete

Goal 2 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update Description: In early 2025, the Columbia County Dual Recovery Coordinator successfully created a comprehensive electronic resource guide. The guide, which currently lives on the Columbia County

Mental Health Center's website (<https://www.columbiacountymhc.com/resource-guide.html>) has an embedded AI function that makes it especially user-friendly. Community providers have been made aware of the resource guide and the ultimate goal is to get it in the hands of all community residents in need.

Goal 2 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 2 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update Description: While initial discussions focused on identifying a County agency to serve as an information and referral center for behavioral health services, it was decided that this would be better placed in the hands of Columbia County Pathways to Recovery (CCPR), a local nonprofit with an already-established warm line and volunteer bank. The electronic resource guide described in Objective 1 will be used by the volunteers who answer the warm line in their efforts to respond to calls and direct folks in need in the right direction. In addition, Columbia County has contracted with PEOPLE USA to create and implement a marketing campaign to promote CCPR's resource line. The goal is to create a resource that will eliminate the confusion caused by having multiple crisis/hotline/warmline numbers and help folks in need access the resources and services needed in a timely manner.

Goal 2 Objective 3, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 2 Objective 3, 2026 Status Update Description: While Columbia County continues to work with 211 and 988 and other regional entities to keep our listings updated, we have found that these regional resource lines don't always have the most comprehensive lists of available services. We plan to continue to keep our listings active and updated, but will also work to publicize the localized resource guide discussed in Objective 1.

Goal 3

Goal 3, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 3, 2026 Status Update Description: While strengthening services and resources available to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities continues to be a priority in Columbia County, progress has been slow. However, there have been some recent successes to report.

The Think Differently initiative has been embraced by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia & Greene Counties, who is now hiring a Program Director to expand current offerings and create new ones. The creation of this position ensures the sustainability of the initiative.

More recently, Columbia County has implemented the Blue Envelope program. Led by the Columbia County Sheriff's Office, the Blue Envelope program helps drivers with autism keep all important documents law enforcement will ask for during a traffic stop in one place. The envelope doubles as an alert to the police officer or sheriff's deputy about the driver's autism so they can adjust their actions or reactions to fit the situation. Columbia County is thrilled to join other law enforcement agencies across NYS who are already implementing this program.

Goal 3 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update: Complete

Goal 3 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update Description: As stated in the overall Goal update, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia & Greene Counties (CCE) has chosen to take the lead with the Think Differently initiative in Columbia County. After collaborating with the County for several years, it became apparent that CCE was better suited to lead this work. Most recently, CCE has reported that they are in the process of hiring a Program Director to oversee the initiative, expand on the current programming, and create new programs. The creation of a position demonstrated the commitment to the effort and ensures some sustainability of the work. Columbia County will continue to collaborate with CCE on this work in the coming year.

Goal 3 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update: N/A

Goal 3 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update Description: This objective is no longer applicable. After several years of discussion and work in this area, it was decided to focus on other priorities at this time.

Goal 4

Goal 4, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 4, 2026 Status Update Description: Recruiting and retaining a qualified behavioral health workforce continues to be a challenge in the post-pandemic world. Columbia County leadership, the CSB and Subcommittees, and other workforce-focused agencies continue to discuss best practices and attempt to create opportunities for collaboration. While these efforts have yielded moderate results, we have chosen to focus our efforts on raising awareness of Federal and State workforce initiatives. The Columbia County Department of Human Services alone has successfully applied for the OMH Community Mental Health Loan Repayment Program on behalf of clinicians and prescribers. In addition, the Department has made staff aware of the CaringGene program in New York State. These programs have also been promoted at CSB, Subcommittee and other meetings of local providers.

Goal 4 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 4 Objective 1, 2026 Status Update Description: The uncertain and unpredictable fiscal landscape of the Federal and State governments have increased the need for local advocacy on behalf of the behavioral health workforce. In April 2025, the Columbia County Board of Supervisors passed a Resolution urging the NYS Congressional Delegation to oppose reductions to Medicaid that would greatly affect residents and behavioral health providers.

Though the CSB has yet to formally advocate on behalf of the local workforce, individual provider agencies have taken the opportunity to do so. This will likely continue in coming years.

Goal 4 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 4 Objective 2, 2026 Status Update Description: The small, rural nature of Columbia County can often be considered a challenge in regards to recruiting and retaining staff, but it has also proven to be very conducive to agency collaboration. This is not unique to workforce issues, but rather can be seen across the board in every facet of the behavioral health world. We have one OASAS-licensed outpatient treatment provider and only a handful of OMH-licensed providers, therefore communication among stakeholders is easily facilitated. It is not uncommon to have representation from most (if not all) of our local provider agencies at the monthly CSB and Subcommittee meetings--and in attendance at other related meetings in between. While none of us claim to have found the answer to the workforce issues facing the County, we continue to work collaboratively to mitigate this challenge. Though this may not be identified as a goal or objective in future Local Services Plans, identifying opportunities for agency collaboration will continue to be a priority in the years to come.

Goal 4 Objective 3, 2026 Status Update: Ongoing

Goal 4 Objective 3, 2026 Status Update Description: Recruitment and retention best practices continue to be the focus of conversations at the County level. Provider agencies have taken the opportunity to share successes and challenges at monthly CSB and Subcommittee meetings. This will be an ongoing conversation for the life of this Local Services Plan and beyond.



Office of Addiction
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2024 Needs Assessment Form Columbia County Department of Human Services

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? No

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):

Prevention Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? No

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): There is limited data that exists on youth substance use in Columbia County and the data that is available is suppressed to maintain confidentiality. However, data that provides an accurate depiction of problem behaviors relating to youth substance use can be found through the New York State Kids Well-being Indicator Clearinghouse. In 2021, 41 adolescents in Columbia County, all under the age of 18, were arrested for drug use/possession/sale.

For individuals over the age of 20, overdose rates and fatalities in Columbia County are alarmingly high. According to Columbia-Greene Addiction Coalition's opioid dashboard, which is funded through the Overdose Data 2 Action grant (OD2A), 29 Columbia County residents died from opioid related overdoses from 2019-2021. The data from this source includes overdose and fatality rates collected in real time from Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAPS) and local coroners and appears to show a correlation between opioid related deaths and age, which could be attributed to the initiation of substance use at a young age. In 2022 in Columbia County, 14% of overdose deaths occurred among people under the age of 30, half of the deaths (50%) occurred in people aged 40-49 years old and an additional 21% of deaths occurred among people in their 30s.

As a result of the above mentioned overdose death rate, Columbia County was a recipient of State Targeted Response (STR) monies from OASAS. The County will continue to receive OD2A funding from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). Columbia County was also included in the HEALing Communities Study (HCS), a multistate study, funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and led by Columbia University that began in the fall of 2019 and will conclude in the spring of 2023.

Despite the recent influx of opioid-related funding, Columbia County continues to lack the Prevention funding necessary to have a significant impact on subsequent substance use. In addition, at the end of 2022, Columbia County's long-time Prevention Provider, Catholic Charities, decided not to renew their OASAS-funded Prevention contract, which left the County without a Prevention provider for the first 6 months of 2023.

Substantial efforts are underway to address Prevention in Columbia County, which is why it is not included in the 2024 Local Services Plan. First, Twin County Recovery Services, the County's sole OASAS-licensed provider, has been awarded the County Prevention contract, which will be in effect starting July 1, 2023. Additionally, the Columbia-Greene Addiction Coalition (CGAC), which began in 2012 and identifies prevention as a primary area of focus, became a 501c3 nonprofit organization in January 2023. Not only has this solidified its efforts under the direction of an Executive Director and a Board of Directors, it has allowed CGAC to apply for prevention-specific funding for both Columbia and Greene Counties. To date, CGAC has applied for OASAS' Community Preventions Coalition funding and the CDC's Drug Free Communities funding.

Residential Treatment Services Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

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? Yes

Need description (Optional):

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): There is widespread agreement in Columbia County that there is a need for increased transportation services for both medical and non-medical (grocery, pharmacy, food pantries, employment support, socialization, etc.) purposes. The Columbia Greene Workforce 2017-2020 Local Plan notes, "The lack of public transportation in our rural area is always an issue that limits not only access to the Career Center, but also access to other workforce preparation services, and job opportunities for many of our most in-need residents." This long-standing lack of transportation negatively impacts quality of life for all residents in Columbia County, particularly individuals who struggle with mental health, substance use or intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Columbia County runs several public transportation routes, requiring four active vehicles. In addition to public transportation, numerous public and private, not-for-profit agencies in the County provide transportation services to Columbia County residents. Collectively, these agencies utilize over 100 vehicles and more than 50 full-time and part-time staff to deliver in excess of 40,000 trips per year. However, according to the 2022 Columbia County Transportation Planning Analysis, almost all transportation providers reported difficulty keeping up with the demand and suggested that County residents would benefit from increased service delivery. The lack of additional vehicles and staff are the two greatest limitations on scaling up these programs.

In addition, though the Federal and State governments provide significant financial support for Columbia County's Public Transportation program, it has historically been difficult for Columbia County to utilize available funds fully, primarily due to the fact that the County has not consistently had a staff person with the high level of specific knowledge, adequate training, and capacity required to constantly monitor

funding opportunities and apply for those deemed suitable.

Despite the significant hardship that the lack of adequate transportation provides Columbia County residents and the barriers identified above, it is not listed as a goal in the 2024 Local Services Plan (LSP). A County Transportation Committee has been formed to compile and analyze local data, identify barriers, and recommend solutions. This Committee has been very active in recent years and is in the process of updating the most recent County Transportation Plan. This Committee is better equipped to provide recommendations that will have a significant positive impact on the public transportation system in Columbia County.

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: Melissa Scheriff

Submitted for: Columbia County Department of Human Services



Office of Addiction
Services and Supports

Office of
Mental Health

Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities

2025 Needs Assessment Form Columbia County Department of Human Services

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):

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): Transportation continues to be a significant need in Columbia County.

While the County does operate some public transportation, it is very limited in scope. Despite the significant hardship that lack of transportation causes among our residents, it is not listed as a Goal on the 2024-27 LSP, as we have historically been able to do very little to move the needle on this overwhelming need. The County continues to work on transportation through the Transportation Committee and we will stay apprised of any progress made in this area.

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: Melissa Scheriff

Submitted for: Columbia County Department of Human Services



**Office of Addiction
Services and Supports**

**Office of
Mental Health**

**Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities**

**2026 Needs Assessment Form
Columbia County Department of Human Services**

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):

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): Transportation is a long-standing barrier to behavioral health services in Columbia County. Due to the rural nature of the County, it can be challenging for folks to access needed services. There is very limited public transportation available to County residents and only a few reliable cab companies. Though transportation has been identified as a Goal in many of our previous LSPs, we have chosen not to include it in this year's LSP as we've been unable to make any improvements in this area over the last few years. However, I am pleased to report that, with funding from NYS, a new bus route was recently established between Hudson and Chatham. We will continue to report on transportation in coming years as it will undoubtedly remain one of the biggest barriers to services.

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: Melissa Scheriff

Submitted for: Columbia County Department of Human Services

Agency Name	Program Name	Program Type Name
AIDS Council of Northeastern New York	Alliance for Postive Health- Hudson SMH CMA	Specialty Mental Health Care Management
Capital District Psychiatric Center	FCH - Sills, Adrienne	Family Care
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Advocacy Services	Advocacy/Support Services
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Bridger - Non Medicaid CC	Non-Medicaid Care Coordination
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County DHS - HH CM	Health Home Care Management
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County DHS - HH Non- Med CM	Health Home Non-Medicaid Care Management
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County Department of Human Services HHSA	Specialty Mental Health Care Management
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County HH CM C&Y	Health Home Care Management
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County HH CM Non Mediciad C&Y	Health Home Non-Medicaid Care Management
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County Homeless-NonMedicaid CC	Non-Medicaid Care Coordination
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County Mental Health	Monitoring and Evaluation, CSS
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County Mental Health Clinic	Mental Health Outpatient Treatment and Rehabilitative Services (MHOTRS)
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County SPOA - Adult	Single Point of Access (SPOA)
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Columbia County SPOA - C&Y	Single Point of Access (SPOA)
Columbia County Department of Human Services	Transition Management	Transition Management Services
Columbia Memorial Hospital	Columbia Memorial Hospital Psychiatric Service	Inpatient Psychiatric Unit of a General Hospital
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	CFTSS-PSR-Col	CFTSS: Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR)

Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	CFTSS: Family Peer Support Services	CFTSS: Family Peer Support Services (FPSS)
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	CFTSS: Mobile Crises Intervention	CFTSS: Mobile Crisis Intervention (CI)
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	CFTSS: Youth Peer Support and Training	CFTSS: Youth Peer Support (YPS)
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Children's Respite-Columbia	Respite Services
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Columbia Co. - Non Medicaid CC	Non-Medicaid Care Coordination
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Columbia Street Apartments	Apartment/Treatment
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Consumer Movement - Columbia Co.	Self-Help Programs
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Greenport Garden SP/SRO	Supportive Single Room Occupancy (SP-SRO)
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Hospital Diversion Services	Respite Services
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA Columbia-Greene CORE Services-FST	CORE Family Support and Training (FST)
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA Columbia-Greene CORE Services-Peer	CORE Empowerment Services - Peer Supports
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA Columbia-Greene Core Services-PSR	CORE Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR)
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA Columbia-Greene SH/Columbia County PC Long Stay-Comm Svc	Supportive Housing
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA Columbia-Greene SH/Transformation Columbia - Comm Svcs	Supportive Housing
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA Columbia-Greene SMH CMA (AOT)	Specialty Mental Health Care Management
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA of Columbia-Greene / SH-Columbia County-Comm.Svcs.	Supportive Housing
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHA of Columbia-Greene Comprehensive Apartment Program	Apartment/Treatment

Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	MHACGC Hudson Community Apartments	Apartment/Treatment
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Mobile Crises Services	Crisis Intervention
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	PEER & REHAB SUP	Recovery Center
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	PROS of Columbia and Greene Counties	Comprehensive PROS with Clinical Treatment
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	PROS of Columbia-Greene Employment Initiative Program	PROS Employment Initiative
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	Supported Education Program	Supported Education
Mental Health Assoc/Columbia-Greene Cos., Inc	The Philmont Hearth	Congregate/Treatment
Unity House of Troy, Inc.	Assisted Employment	Assisted Competitive Employment