



**Monroe County
Department of Human Services**

**Adult Protective Services
2024 Annual Report**

**Monroe County Adult Protective Services
691 St. Paul Street
Rochester, NY 14605
Intake: (585) 753-6532**

**MONROE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Mission

The Department of Human Services delivers strengths-based, comprehensive, responsive, and coordinated services guided by measurable results.

Vision

The Department of Human Services empowers residents to achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency and independence and promotes safety, and physical and emotional well-being.

Requested by:	Lynn White, Administrative Caseworker
To support:	MCDHS Adult Protective Services
Prepared by:	Martin Williams, Senior Human Services Planner
Data sources:	ASAP.Net
Data as of:	December 2024

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Introduction

Adult Protective Services (APS) is a mandated service provided by local social services districts in New York State. It involves intake, investigation, and assessment of referrals of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of impaired vulnerable adults who live in the community. APS workers develop service plans for eligible clients to remedy physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, or to address unmet, essential needs of adults.

APS serves adults ages 18 and older who, due to physical or mental impairments are unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, or other harm and have no one available who is willing and able to assist responsibly. Services provided include:

- Investigation and assessment of the adult's needs and risk of self-harm or harm by others
- Counseling for the victimized adult and their family
- Case management, including locating and arranging medical and mental health assessments and services, home health care, home-delivered meals, and homemaker or housekeeper chore services and monitoring of these services to ensure that the services continue to be necessary and appropriate
- Advocacy to assist in obtaining benefits and services to which the adult is entitled
- Assistance with locating alternative living arrangements
- Money management to assist adults who are unable to manage their own resources on their own behalf or to protect themselves from exploitation, which can range from assisting with paying bills to arranging much more formal financial management services
- Crisis interventions, including short-term involuntary protective services orders, orders of protection, admission to a psychiatric facility, or admission to a developmental center if the person, because of an impairment, is incapable of making the choices necessary to remove the endangering condition
- Long-term involuntary interventions, such as seeking guardianship for persons who lack capacity or who need protection to care for their person, their property, or both.

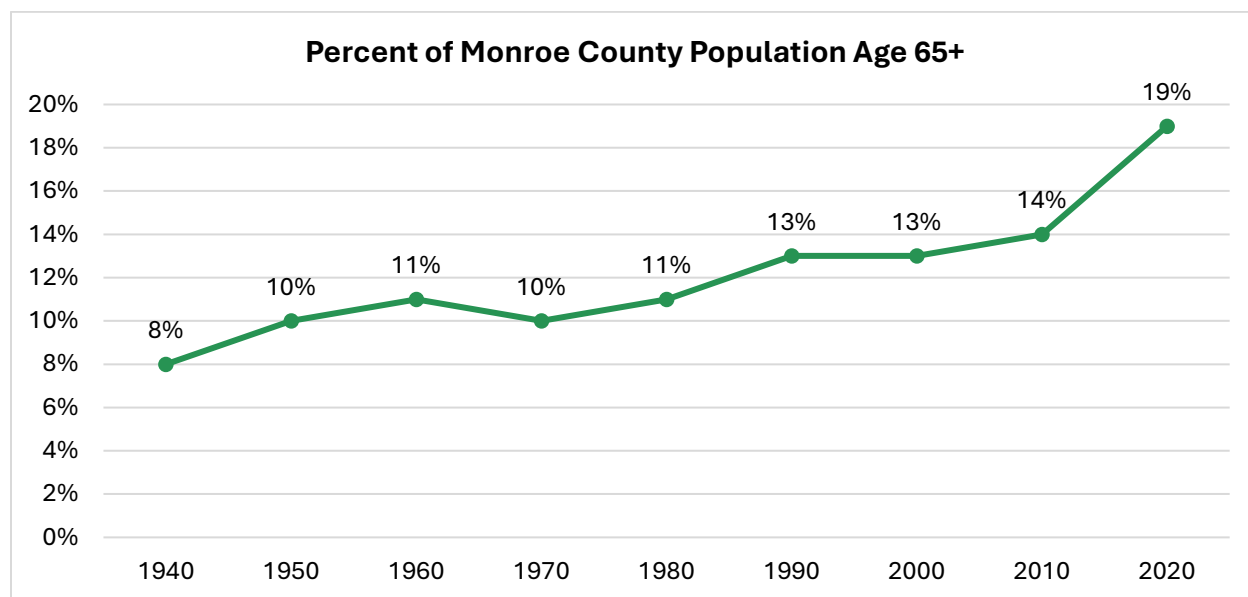
Throughout 2024, Monroe County APS has continued its work with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and local service providers to promote the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults in the community. The individuals who require APS assistance include adults of all ages who may be frail, have a mental illness, developmental disabilities, and acute or chronic physical illnesses or disabilities. Many are older adults who may have some cognitive impairments or are otherwise unable to handle some of life's daily

tasks on their own. These situations can quickly result in risks to safety and health. Approximately 80% of APS referrals are made from concern for someone age 60 or older.

Baby Boomers – the generation born between 1946 and 1964 – are now between 61 and 79 years of age. Many are retired and devote countless hours to volunteering, sharing their knowledge and skills with others, and staying active in their communities, but some are not so fortunate. They may face increasing isolation as poorer physical health limits their ability to leave their homes, have children who live far away and cannot visit regularly, or have a spouse or close friends who may have moved to nursing homes or passed away. All of these circumstances – and many others – can lead to older adults finding themselves in unsafe situations and in need of APS.

The number of older adults in Monroe County continues to increase, with an estimated 137,752 residents ages 65 and older in 2023.¹ This percentage has jumped rapidly in the last ten to fifteen years and referrals for older adults will continue to make up the vast majority of calls received.

Figure 1. Percent of Monroe County population age 65+, 1940-2023²



¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-year Estimates Data Profiles.

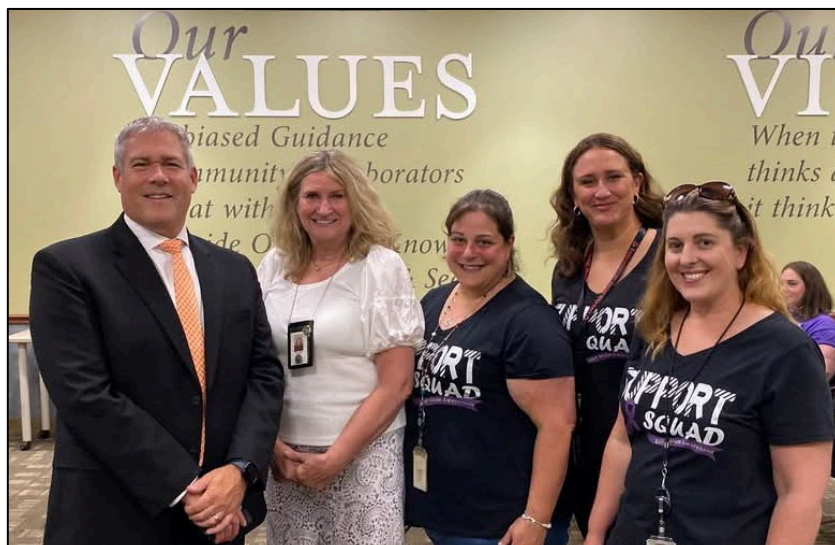
² U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census.

2024 Highlights and Accomplishments

Celebrating a Successful NYS Office of Children and Family Services Case Review: The excellent work of Monroe County APS staff was affirmed in the 2024 case review by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). This review examined files of 60 clients at various stages of APS assistance. Selections were representative of staff who are performing the work, the vulnerable population served, and, where possible, files included a range of geographic areas within Monroe County, gender, age, and risk factors. OCFS noted that “the diligence, professionalism, and commitment of the Monroe County APS unit was evident in the high quality of progress notes and case work sampled for review.” Once again, there were no items found that required a performance improvement plan.

Implementing a New Guardianship Team: After many years of subcontracting the case management and guardianship responsibilities portion of the program to a community partner, DHS elected to return this function to APS. This work started in 2023 and required a full year of planning, but at the end of this process, APS welcomed four caseworkers, one senior caseworker, and one supervisor to the unit and added three finance specialists to the new APS Guardianship Finance Team. APS now has one team that handles guardianship and representative payee duties exclusively and one team that handles non-guardianship intake and assessment duties exclusively. These changes will ensure high-quality services are provided to some of the most vulnerable individuals APS serves.

Raising Awareness of Elder Abuse: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is commemorated each year on June 15 to raise awareness of and promote a better understanding of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older persons. Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person and is often carried out by someone they know and trust, such as a family member or friend. The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological, or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect. Monroe County Executive Adam Bello joined DHS staff at Lifespan to recognize and promote current efforts to educate the public about elder



abuse prevention. Additionally, APS staff visited the Eastside Family YMCA where they spoke to participants in Silver Sneakers classes and other members of the facility about how to recognize and prevent elder abuse.

Promoting APS Services in the Community: APS staff attended a variety of public events in 2024 to connect with the community and increase the public’s knowledge of APS services. Staff were also invited to speak throughout the year on APS-related topics and provide general information to community groups and organizations. Approximately 1,500 people were reached through these efforts. APS staff also participated in the quarterly CFS 101, an online, introductory presentation about DHS Child and Family Services programs. Attendees included new (and sometimes experienced) DHS employees, staff from other Monroe County departments, school districts, local universities, and community agencies – over 90 attendees who represented over 30 different organizations.

APS Impact

“John”

A former youth in foster care is now an independent adult living on his own – with a little help from Monroe County APS. “John” maintains his own apartment and enjoys his part-time job at ArcWorks, which has given him the opportunity to participate in multiple projects for several businesses around Monroe County.

His successes don’t stop there. For the past several years, he has participated on the basketball and baseball teams at the Special Olympics and has also earned a spot on the 2025 basketball team. APS staff wholeheartedly support his efforts to live independently and encourage him to follow his sports dreams.

“Michael”

Michael, in his early 60s and frequently homeless, had been in and out of the hospital and was transferred to a local nursing home to recuperate. He was referred to APS by the nursing home when he left against medical advice.

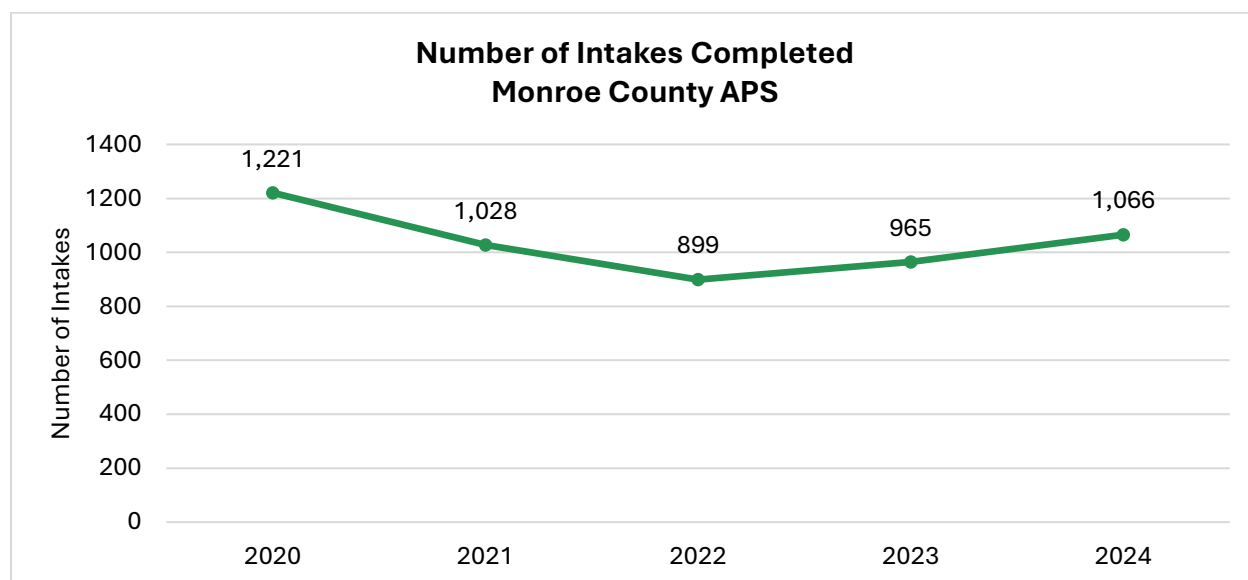
The nursing home provided APS with contact information for one of Michael’s friends, who told the caseworker the area in the City of Rochester where Michael frequently spent time. After a few unsuccessful searches for him, the caseworker returned to the area, found Michael, and engaged with him. Although at first he would only accept a sleeping bag, the caseworker continued to visit and build his trust. She assisted him with obtaining a copy of his birth certificate which allowed him to apply for public benefits like Medicaid and SNAP. He now has a primary care physician monitoring his health and is comfortable and safe in his new apartment.

Intake

Referrals to APS come from a variety of sources, including family members, friends, neighbors, agency representatives, health professionals, faith leaders, and first responders. Everyone who makes a referral to APS is concerned about the health and safety of a community member and may not know where else to turn. In many instances, their familiarity with APS is very limited, but they know and trust that making this contact will hopefully mean a positive change in someone's life.

After receiving a referral, APS has three business days to conduct an intake and determine if an individual is eligible for APS services. Basic criteria for eligibility are if the individual is 18 years of age or older; has a mental or physical impairment; and there is no one else willing, able, and responsible to assist. Monroe County received 1,066 APS referrals in 2024. Each received a thorough evaluation to determine if and how APS could assist with the situation.

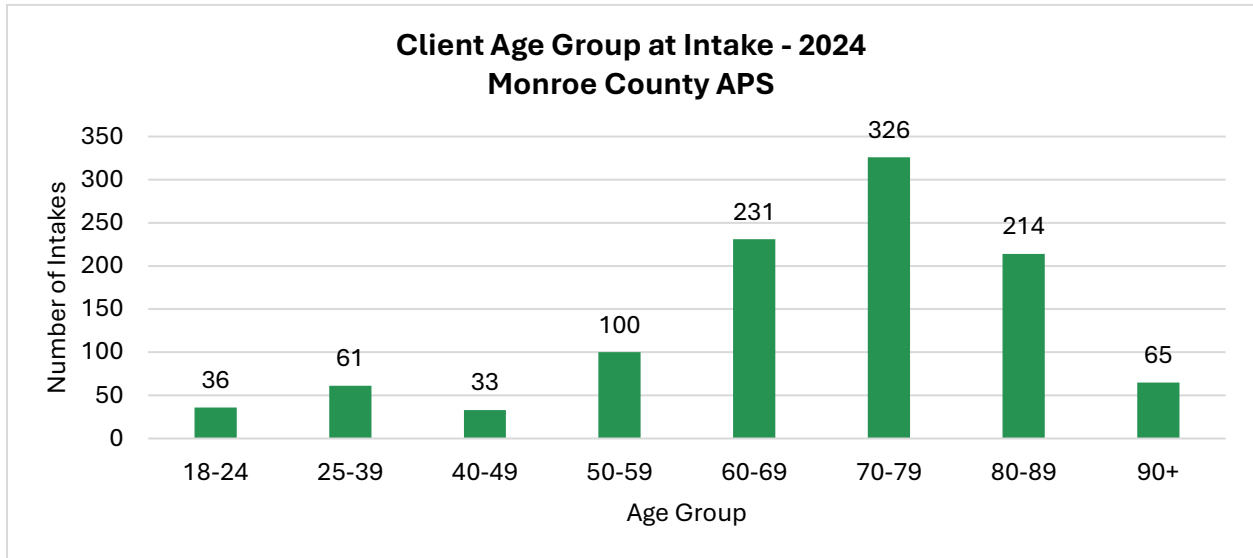
Figure 2. Five-year trend: Number of intakes completed



Demographics

Approximately 80% of intakes in 2024 involved individuals aged 60 and older, the age group traditionally thought of as receiving APS services. It is common, though, for APS to receive referrals for individuals younger than 60 and in 2024, caseworkers completed the intake process for 230 individuals from age 18 to age 59. Gender distribution remained fairly constant from previous years with a close to 60/40 split between females and males.

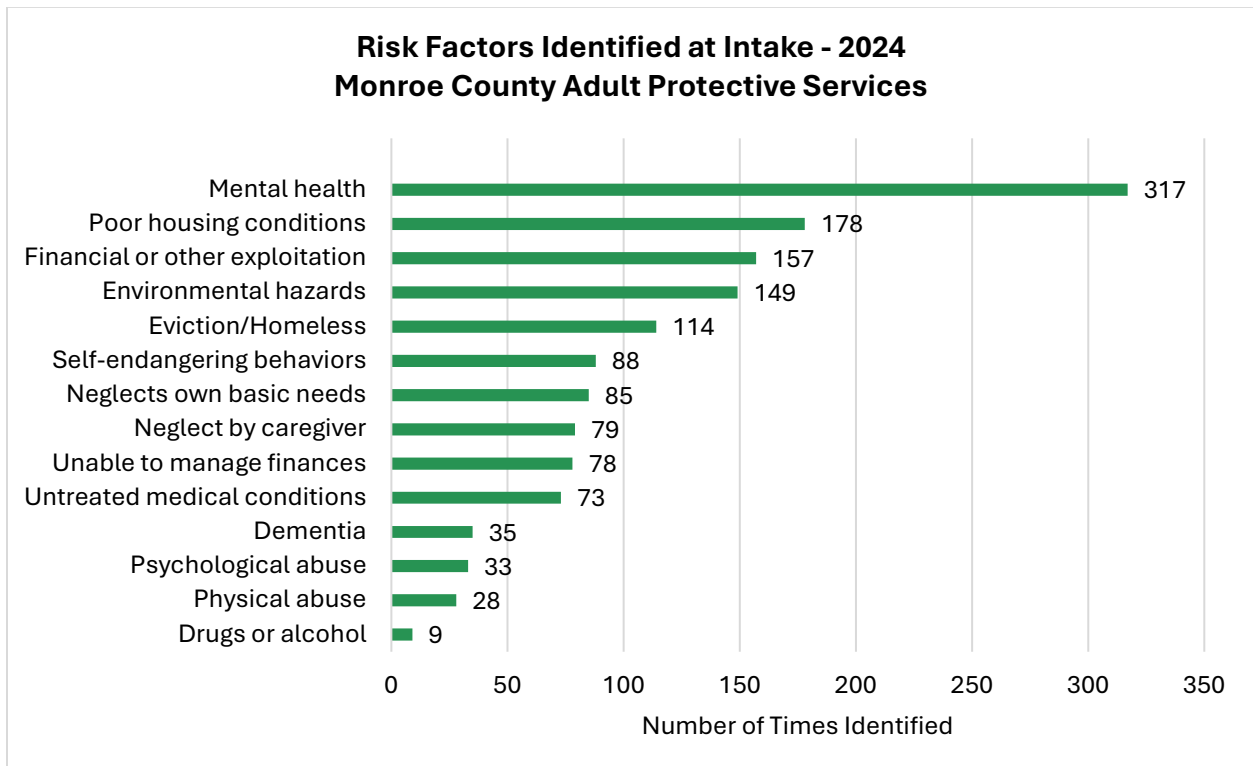
Figure 3. Client age group distribution at intake, 2024



Risk Factors

Mental health concerns continue as the most-reported risk factor at intake and were present in approximately 30% of the referrals received – down from 40% to 47% of referrals received in the previous four years. The remaining risk factors showed relatively minor changes from 2023 to 2024.

Figure 4. Risk factors identified at intake, 2024



APS works closely with the Office of Mental Health and many other community-based mental health programs by making referrals for necessary services and participating in workgroups and projects. APS staff continue to collaborate with the Emergency Housing unit and Neighborhood Empowerment Team (NET) offices around housing issues and partner with Lifespan to address clients' financial exploitation issues. Lifespan leads a local Enhanced Multi-Disciplinary Team (E-MDT), which includes representatives from law enforcement, the legal and financial communities, and leading providers of elder care and adult services.

Assessment

After the screening and intake process has been completed, caseworkers and their supervisors decide if each reported situation meets the criteria required for APS intervention. Approximately 80% of these referrals do not meet the criteria and APS staff discuss with referral sources the other community resources available to assist with their situations.

Some individuals – up to 100 per year – are referred to Lifespan through the Elder Justice program if the individual is age 60 or older. This program co-locates a Lifespan social worker with APS and is utilized when individuals could benefit from services to stabilize their situation, prevent recurrence of harm, and improve functioning and quality of life. Examples include linking clients to services that will increase access to physical and mental health care, transportation, housing, and improve economic stability and safety.

The remaining 20% of referrals that *do* meet APS criteria are assigned to caseworkers for further investigation and support. An average of 10.5 new referrals were assigned to caseworkers each month in 2024. For these referrals that move into the assessment phase, there is a 60-day timeframe during which the caseworker visits the client and speaks with family members, providers, and other agencies and individuals who may be involved in the client's life. The caseworker assesses the risks facing a client, his or her ability to deal with the situation, and willingness to accept assistance from others. The caseworker develops a service plan to address any unmet, essential needs. Ideally, the client will accept this plan and the services can be provided on a voluntary basis. However, this is not always the case.

A competent adult has the right to exercise free choice in decision-making and, without clear evidence of risk, APS staff cannot force the individual to accept assistance. If a person is capable of understanding the risks and consequences of their choices or behaviors, APS must respect those choices and will also attempt to help the individual reduce the possibility of harm.

If APS *must* intervene, the interventions are limited to the actions required to address specific dangers. It is important to note that in addition to the right of self-determination, vulnerable adults have the right to live in the least restrictive environment possible unless the individual is determined to be medically incompetent or legally incapacitated by a court ruling. APS has no legal authority on its own to remove any person from their home or other setting or to take any involuntary action. APS must request action from the court or some other official authorized to take such action.

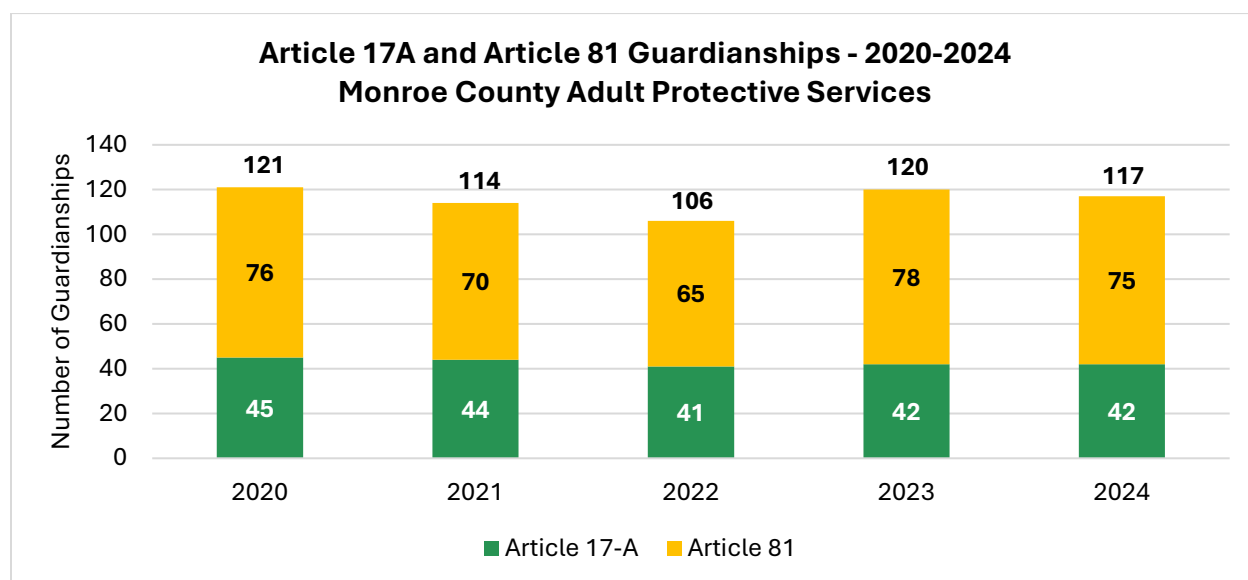
Guardianship

Adult guardianship is a legal process used to assist individuals who are unable to make decisions or manage affairs for themselves. Guardians are appointed by judges and in New York State there are two types of adult guardianships:

- Article 17-A guardianship is governed by Article 17-A of the Surrogate's Court Procedure Act. Article 17-A appoints a guardian for adults age 18 or over who are intellectually or developmentally disabled.
- Article 81 guardianship is governed by Article 81 of the Mental Hygiene Law. Article 81 guardianships are for adults who have been determined to be incapacitated, meaning they are unable to care for their own property and/or personal needs, and likely to suffer harm because they cannot understand the consequences of not being able to care for their property and/or personal needs.

The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services is assigned guardianship of an individual if a judge determines that there is no other willing or suitable family member or individual to do so. APS managed guardianships of 117 individuals in 2024, with 11 starting and 106 continuing.

Figure 5. Five-year trend: Article 17-A and Article 81 guardianships



Representative Payee Services

APS also serves as representative payee for individuals who have difficulty managing their finances with their Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits. The appointment of DHS as a representative payee occurs when all other options are exhausted. In 2024, APS assisted 103 individuals with representative payee services: 42 with APS staff or the APS contractor, Balanced Care, as representative payee and 61 where APS handled guardianship but the client's nursing home, group home, family member, or other relation acted as representative payee.

Utility Referrals

The Home Energy Fair Practices Act of 1981 extends protection to residential utility customers faced with termination of service due to non-payment, theft of service, or meter tampering. In Monroe County, DHS is designated to receive and respond to referrals made by utility companies regarding customers facing service termination who are aged, blind, disabled, have a suspected serious impairment, or are in a neglectful or hazardous living situation. APS staff received 24 referrals from utility companies in 2024 and took steps to resolve non-payment situations and prevent termination of utility services.

Family-Type Homes for Adults

A family-type home for adults (FTHA) is an adult care facility in which an operator provides residential care, personal care, or supervision services in his or her own home to up to four adults who are not related to the operator. An FTHA offers a home-like living environment that is a supportive alternative to adults who are unable to live alone any longer but who do not require the considerably more costly and comprehensive care offered in a nursing home.

New York State's OCFS Bureau of Adult Services is responsible for licensing family-type homes, but designates the oversight, inspection, and enforcement functions to counties. Monroe County currently has only one licensed family-type home. APS staff also investigated several unlicensed family-type homes in 2024. These came to the attention of APS through advertisements or referrals by municipal officials. Caseworkers visit these homes and educate the owners about the licensing process and related requirements.

Next Steps

Monroe County DHS is honored to be named again as one of New York State's leaders in providing high-quality, comprehensive adult protective services. The dedicated professionals of APS help to support the medical, social, economic, legal, housing, and many other needs of some of Monroe County's most vulnerable residents.

Caseworkers are well-prepared to assist the growing number of older adults in Monroe County, carry out the required duties of guardianships and act as representative payees, and provide information and guidance to community members and referral sources.

Of course, this work cannot be accomplished by APS alone. Numerous community partners such as the Monroe County Office for the Aging, the Monroe County Office of Mental Health, the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, and Lifespan provide invaluable and specialized services to complement the work APS performs.

Family members, concerned neighbors, and agency representatives who make referrals to APS are perhaps the most important part of system. These are the individuals in the community who observe unmet needs and unsafe situations and want to make a positive difference in someone's life. Their concern for adults in need is to be commended.

Adult Protective Services Staffing

as of December 31, 2024

Administration

Thalia Wright, Commissioner, Department of Human Services

Amy Natale-McConnell, Director of Child and Family Services

Lauren LaGioia, DHS Finance Administrator

Lynn White, Administrative Caseworker

APS Intake and Assessment

Tshana Cooper, Casework Supervisor

Kerri DeLuca, Senior Caseworker

Megan Bortz, Caseworker

Elisa Ianniello, Caseworker

Monica Locke, Caseworker

Marcia Rivera, Caseworker

Danen Danielak, Caseworker (per diem)

APS Guardianship

Amy Herring, Casework Supervisor

Lynda Backus, Senior Caseworker

Mara Engel, Senior Caseworker

Lashaun Myers-Scott, Senior Caseworker

Joelle Kerns, Caseworker

Amanda Tomino, Caseworker

Bernadette Wallace, Caseworker

Maelee Whitford, Caseworker

Shannell Darby, Case Aide

APS Guardianship Finance

Kerry Frear-Caliri, Supervisor of Claims and Accounts

Maretta Phillips, Assistant Supervisor

Cassie Uebelacker, Assistant Supervisor