



New York State Assembly

Carl E. Heastie, Speaker

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

A dark blue silhouette of a city skyline, including various skyscrapers and buildings, positioned behind the large white text of the title.

Committee on

Aging

Steven H. Cymbrowitz, Chair



STEVEN CYMBROWITZ
Assemblyman 75TH District
Kings County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Aging

COMMITTEES
Codes
Environmental Conservation
Health
Insurance

December 15, 2015

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 349
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to present the 2015 Annual Report of the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging. In my first legislative session as Chair of the Committee on Aging, I was tasked with advancing legislation aimed at protecting the quality of life, health, safety, and independence of New York's seniors. The work accomplished during the 2015 Legislative Session reflects the commitment of the Committee to achieve these goals.

This year, the Committee on Aging continued to address the crime of elder abuse – specifically financial exploitation – as it is becoming the most common crime committed against the elderly. In a positive development on this front, legislation passed by both Houses this year would require the New York State Office for the Aging, in consultation with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, to conduct a public education campaign regarding elder abuse. The campaign would focus on the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, where suspected elder abuse can be reported, and contact information for programs that can help. This bill was ultimately vetoed, but in the upcoming year the Committee will continue its work to prevent the exploitation of older New Yorkers.

Housing is a vital need, especially in the City of New York where many seniors live in rental housing. This year, the Aging Committee made great strides toward improving the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) programs, and ensuring that these programs deliver much-needed benefits to eligible senior renters. The robust package of bills included an imperative measure that would grandfather participants into the SCRIE and DRIE program at their current frozen rent for as long as they are in the program. It also would create a re-enrollment opportunity for individuals whose rent increase exemption expired and whose income made them ineligible to renew the benefit, but who then became eligible for the benefit again under the increased income limit that took effect in July 2014. These

individuals would be able to regain their previously frozen rent amount. Another piece of legislation would enable an eligible surviving member of a household to transfer a SCRIE/DRIE benefit from the deceased head of household to their own name, continuing the exemption as the new head of household. In addition, new legislation passed this year would require the administering agency of SCRIE and DRIE programs to develop and distribute informational material describing the eligibility for and benefits of SCRIE and DRIE. By strengthening these programs, our efforts will help protect seniors and persons with disabilities, and give them the peace of mind that they will not be displaced from their homes and communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee members for their continued contributions to this past year's achievements. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your leadership and support of our legislative initiatives to better protect New York State seniors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steven Cymbrowitz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "S" at the beginning.

Steven H. Cymbrowitz,
Chair, Committee on Aging

**2015 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGING**

STEVEN H. CYMBROWITZ, CHAIR

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Felicia A. Reid, *Associate Counsel*
Aubree Heydrick, *Committee Assistant*
Cindy Ceniviva, *Program and Counsel Secretary*
Lena DeThomasis, *Committee Clerk*

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I. Committee Responsibilities and Goals

The New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Aging has jurisdiction over legislation affecting the quality of life of New York's senior citizen population. The Committee also reviews certain legislation providing real property tax relief for those over the age of 65. The Committee works closely with the New York State Office for the Aging and has legislative and budgetary oversight of the agency's programs.

The Committee works to ensure that essential services are available for seniors so that they may enjoy a high quality of life as they get older. This includes programs such as: the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP), Caregiver Resource Centers, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP), the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Respite Programs, Social Adult Day Programs, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORCs), the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program, Foster Grandparent Programs, the Elder Abuse Education and Outreach Program, and locally-based Meals-on-Wheels Programs. The Committee also has legislative and budgetary oversight of the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program, which is administered by the New York State Department of Health.

During the 2015 Legislative Session, the Committee reviewed 122 bills that sought to address and remedy many concerns affecting seniors. These bills dealt with issues such as reducing the real property tax burden on low-income seniors, protecting seniors from abuse and victimization, ensuring that seniors are able to safely remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible with the supports they deserve, and providing a variety of supports and resources to seniors and their caregivers.

The following report details the major legislative activities and accomplishments of the Committee on Aging during the 2015 Legislative Session.

II. 2015 COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Real Property Tax

In 1970, the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program began offering qualifying senior citizens an exemption from future rent increases. In 2005, it was expanded to include qualifying tenants with disabilities under the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program. These programs help eligible senior citizens (aged 62 and over) and tenants with qualifying disabilities, living in rent-controlled and rent-stabilized apartments in New York City, stay in affordable housing by freezing their rent. It is the goal of the Committee on Aging to enable and support seniors so that they may remain in their homes and out of costly institutions for as long as possible. The SCRIE and DRIE programs help to accomplish this goal by providing a property tax credit to building owners, which covers the difference between the actual rent amount and what the tenant is responsible for paying at the frozen rate.

1. Renewal Notices for the SCRIE Program

A.1087 (Dinowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would require that the appropriate rent control or administrative agency send a notice of renewal to each head of household currently receiving an exemption under the SCRIE program. The notice would be sent no less than 30 days prior to the applicable renewal date.

2. Annual Notification of Eligibility for SCRIE and DRIE

A.2124-A (Rosenthal); Chapter 424 of the Laws of 2015

This law requires the agency administering the SCRIE and DRIE programs to develop informational material describing eligibility for and benefits of SCRIE and DRIE, as well as how additional information can be obtained regarding these programs. Such informational material will be provided to landlords of rent-stabilized housing for distribution to eligible tenants who may qualify for either program. The landlord will be required to provide this information to eligible tenants at least once annually, including with a new lease and all renewal leases.

3. Availability and Assistance in the Completion of Tax Abatement Forms

A.5320 (Cymbrowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would facilitate enrollment in SCRIE and DRIE by requiring that necessary forms for these programs, and the assistance to complete them, be made available in communities. This bill would require the supervising agency that administers SCRIE and DRIE to develop and implement a plan to increase the

ability of participants to obtain and complete applicable forms in community settings. Any such plan would require partnering with organizations and municipal entities or agencies that engage in outreach initiatives and provide supportive services.

4. Outreach, Status, and Time Limits Relating to SCRIE and DRIE

A.5332 (Cymbrowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would require any entity that oversees SCRIE and DRIE programs to implement and administer a program for the development of outreach initiatives in order to identify eligible individuals who are not participating in SCRIE and DRIE, and then provide those individuals with information about the programs. Outreach efforts would include: mailings, advertisements, public service announcements, literature dissemination, social media, community outreach, and developing partnerships with other municipal entities and agencies.

The bill would also require municipalities participating in SCRIE and DRIE to develop a program that allows applicants and participants to determine the status of their tax abatement forms, as well as any other filed forms. Programs would be required to include provisions that enable applicants and participants, whose primary language is not English, or who have communication impediments due to blindness, deafness, cognitive impairments, or speech impediments, or who lack access to the internet, to determine the status of their tax abatement and any filed forms.

5. Transferring a Rent Increase Exemption to a New Head of Household

A.7247-A (Simotas); Passed both Houses, Awaiting Delivery to Governor

This law allows an eligible surviving member of a household to apply to the agency administering SCRIE and DRIE to transfer the rent increase exemption from the deceased head of household to their own name, continuing the exemption as the new head of household.

The option to transfer the exemption is now available for six months after the death of the head of household, or 90 days after a notice from the administrative agency stating that the exemption benefit has expired upon the death of the head of household, whichever occurs later. Such notice shall include an explanation of the process to transfer such exemption and the time period in which to do so, along with the form needed to transfer the exemption.

6. Grandfathering Participants into SCRIE and DRIE

A.7914-A (Cymbrowitz); Chapter 553 of the Laws of 2015

Due to recent changes in the administration of SCRIE and DRIE by the New York City Department of Finance, many seniors and persons with disabilities were at risk of being dropped from these programs. This bill would grandfather participants into the SCRIE or DRIE program as of January 1, 2015 at their current frozen rent, as well as individuals who entered the program on or before July 1, 2015, for as long as they are in the program. New applicants would remain subject to the one-third rent-to-income ratio requirement.

The bill would also create a re-enrollment opportunity for individuals whose rent increase exemption expired on or after December 31, 2013, and whose income made them ineligible to renew the benefit, but who then became eligible for the benefit once again under the increased income limit that took effect on July 1, 2014. Such re-enrollment change would allow such individuals to regain their previous frozen rent amount as if they had not left the SCRIE or DRIE program, rather than the higher rent that was set under the new income limit.

7. Reapplication to SCRIE or DRIE after a Period of Ineligibility

A.8228 (Cymbrowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would allow a head of household, who has been dropped from the SCRIE or DRIE program due to a non-recurring item of income that either causes the combined household income to exceed the maximum amount, or makes the legal regulated rent less than one-third of the combined household income, to reapply in the following calendar year. If accepted, the head of household would make rent payments at their previous frozen rent amount. A head of the household would not be able receive more than three such rent increase exemption re-calculations.

B. Safety, Health, and Well-Being

With a growing number of seniors living independently, it is becoming increasingly important to ensure that older adults are safe at home and in their communities, and that they maintain their health and wellness. As people age, they may become more vulnerable to a variety of hazards such as falls, drug interactions, and victimization. Seniors are more likely to be affected by such hazards, and thus suffer more severe consequences than do young adults. It is the goal of the Committee on Aging to help prevent such hazards and establish appropriate responses.

1. Home Visitation for Elderly Victims of Violent Crime

A.300 (Dinowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would require the State Office of Victim Services to consult the State Office for the Aging in the promotion of volunteer home visitation programs for elderly and invalid victims of violent crime.

2. Renaming and Broadening the Geriatric Service Demonstration Program

A.1234 (Dinowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would rename the “Geriatric Service Demonstration Program” as the “Geriatric Mental Health and Chemical Dependence Demonstration Program”. It would also extend grant eligibility – currently limited to providers of mental health services for the elderly – to include providers of chemical dependency and compulsive gambling treatments for the elderly, and require the demonstration program to be administered in cooperation with the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.

3. Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease Program Database

A.5318 (Cymbrowitz); Veto Memo. 257

This bill would require that the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health (DOH), establish a database of programs that have proven successful in supporting and treating elderly individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's disease. The Director of NYSOFA, in conjunction with the Commissioner of DOH, and in consultation with public, government, non-profit, and for-profit agencies, would develop criteria to determine the success of each program and recommendations for their inclusion in the database. The database would be publicly available on NYSOFA’s website and would be updated, at least, once annually. The purpose of this database would be to facilitate the spread of successful treatment models across the State.

4. Improving Oversight of Social Adult Day Care Programs

A.5352 (Cymbrowitz); Veto Memo. 230

This bill would remove the requirement that a social adult day program be the recipient of a grant from the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) in order to be subject to NYSOFA’s rules and promulgated regulations. The bill would also amend the definition of “social adult day services” and “social adult day care” to prohibit any person or program from holding themselves out as providing social adult day care unless they meet the specific requirements of the definition.

This bill would also require the Director of NYSOFA to submit a report, on or before December 31, 2016, to the Governor, the Temporary President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Aging, and the Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging on the projected costs and benefits of establishing uniform standards and requirements with regards to social adult day programs in the State. The report would include the Director's findings, recommendations, and estimate of the fiscal implications of regulating social adult day care services in the State.

5. Extending the Authorization of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
A.7820 (Cymbrowitz); Chapter 462 of the Laws of 2015

This law extends the authorization of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) to advocate on behalf of managed long-term care participants until December 31, 2017. This law also makes technical corrections to the statute for the State ombudsman program.

6. Providing Hospital Discharge Coordinators with Lists of Local Services
A.7791-A (Mayer); Chapter 556 of the Laws of 2015

This bill would require the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) to develop a list, organized by county, of programs and services offered by local area agencies on aging, as well as contact information for the local area agencies on aging, and NYConnects. Such information would be made available on NYSOFA's website and would be provided to hospital discharge coordinators throughout the State.

This bill would also require hospital discharge coordinators to provide such information to any individual aged 62 years of age or older being discharged from a hospital. The information provided to the individual must correspond to their county of residence.

C. Elder Abuse

Elder abuse affects thousands of seniors across New York State every year. There are many types of elder abuse, including physical, verbal, sexual, emotional, and financial. Efforts to help the growing number of seniors impacted by elder abuse seek to end the severe challenges surrounding the issue, chief among them, the lack of awareness and information about the signs and symptoms of elder abuse. Working to increase opportunities to identify signs of abuse, increase outreach and education, and empower seniors who are or may become victims of elder abuse is the Committee on Aging's priority.

1. Coordinating Police Services to Elderly Persons

A.928 (Miller); Chapter 244 of the Laws of 2015

This law broadens the purview of the Committee for the Coordination of Police Services to Elderly Persons (the Committee) to provide for additional programs for its consideration to help combat the problem of crime against elderly persons as well as assist the elderly in avoiding criminal victimization. Prior to this law, the Committee was limited to studying and evaluating “Triad Programs”.

2. Opt-In Program for Reporting Suspected Financial Exploitation

A.4037 (Robinson); Passed Assembly

This bill would require the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) to create a program whereby financial institutions would be required to report suspected financial exploitation of a participating account holder to the appropriate adult protective services and law enforcement agencies. This program would be offered to all account holders, but participation would be voluntary and revocable at any time during the program. Account holders would be required to submit a form to their financial institution to both commence and terminate their inclusion in the program. This form would be kept on file with the financial institution for as long as the account holder maintains an account with the financial institution. A copy of the form would be forwarded to DFS and the account holder.

Any officer, director, agent or employee of a financial institution, who has cause to suspect financial exploitation of a participating account holder, would be required to submit a form prescribed by DFS to report the suspected financial exploitation in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by DFS.

This bill would also provide those financial institutions that report suspected financial abuse, should they do so reasonably and in good faith, with immunity from any civil liability that might otherwise result by reason of such reporting. Further, any information or documentation submitted pursuant to this legislation would not be subject to disclosure under the State Freedom of Information Law.

3. Elder Abuse Public Education Campaign

A.7612-A (Cymbrowitz); Veto Memo. 241

This bill would require that the New York State Office for the Aging, in consultation with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, conduct a public education campaign regarding elder abuse. The campaign would focus on the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, where suspected elder abuse can be reported, and contact information for programs that can help. It would also

include printed, audio, video, electronic, and other media, as well as public service announcements or advertisements.

D. Other Legislation

1. Best Practices for Retaining Employees Who Are Informal Caregivers

A.294 (Dinowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would encourage businesses to retain workers who are informal caregivers and to provide such businesses with information on ways to do so. The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), in conjunction with the New York State Department of Labor and community-based organizations that represent the interests of informal caregivers, would develop and annually update a guide for businesses that outlines best practices for retaining and supporting employees who are informal caregivers. This guide would be available on the NYSOFA, New York State Department of Labor, and New York State Department of State websites.

2. New York State Senior Center Council

A.1150 (Rodriguez); Passed Assembly

This bill would establish the New York State Senior Center Council. The Council would discuss the challenges facing senior centers and develop solutions to these problems. The members of the Council would represent all geographic areas of the State, as well as older adult groups, to create an environment of peer-to-peer support for senior centers, encourage efficient and effective operation of senior centers, and offer recommendations for how the State can support senior centers.

3. Establishing Model Community Programs

A.5337 (Cymbrowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would require the New York State Office for the Aging to develop model community programs materials to be distributed, upon request, to local area agencies on aging and to community organizations. Such model programs would include:

- a telephone reassurance program, whose guidelines would address:
 - phone calls from community organizations to participating seniors;
 - a secondary contact, if applicable, to call if a senior does not answer;
 - coordination with law enforcement to ensure appropriate response if a senior cannot be contacted;

- consent to access the home by law enforcement if a senior cannot be contacted; and
- coordination between participating seniors and program operators to reduce incidents resulting in unnecessary law enforcement involvement; and
- a visiting program to provide seniors with regular contact, whose guidelines would address:
 - obtaining volunteers by partnering with educational institutions;
 - screening volunteers to ensure good matches and protect seniors; and
 - checking on seniors and volunteers, and responding to problems that may arise.

4. Hiring, Retaining, and Retraining Older Workers

A.5354 (Cymbrowitz); Passed Assembly

This bill would direct the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), in conjunction with the New York State Department of Labor, to develop and annually update a guide for businesses to hire, retain, and retrain mature workers. This guide would be made available on the websites of NYSOFA, the New York State Department of Labor, and the New York State Department of State, as well as to businesses that obtain licensure or certification from such agencies.

5. Aging in New York: State Plan on Aging

A.7628-A (Barron); Passed Assembly

This bill would require the creation of an interagency council comprised of the following New York State agencies: the Office for the Aging, the Department of Health, the Office of Mental Health, the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, the Department of Labor, the Department of Financial Services, the Department of Transportation, and the Office of Children and Family Services. The Council would develop a statewide plan on aging to account for the current and future needs of older adults. The plan would focus on several areas including, but not limited to: health services, community-based services, housing, workforce issues, kincare, and mental health and substance abuse services.

III. SFY 2015-2016 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015-2016 Budget provided funding for many programs in New York State that are dedicated to protecting the quality of life, health, safety, and independence of senior citizens. These programs and services provide significant and essential assistance to the elderly as well as their caregivers, families, friends, and neighbors. The following chart lists these aging programs and the amount at which they were funded in this year's budget.

Programs/Services	Total Funding
Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP)	\$50,012,000
Wellness in Nutrition (WIN) Program	\$27,326,000
Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) Program	\$25,296,000
Cost of Living Adjustment for direct care staff, direct support staff, and clinical staff	\$7,400,000
Point of Entry Initiatives for Long Term Care Systems	\$3,350,000
Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)	\$2,027,500
Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORCs)	\$2,027,500
Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program (MCCAP)*	\$1,767,000
Grants for transportation operating expenses for the elderly	\$1,121,000
Grants for providers of social model adult day services	\$1,072,000
Grants for the Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program (HIICAP)	\$921,000
Elderly Abuse Education and Outreach Program	\$745,000
Local grants for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program	\$690,000
State aid grants for providers of respite services	\$656,000
Congregate Services Initiative	\$403,000
Caregiver Resource Centers	\$353,000
Association on Aging in New York State	\$250,000
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)	\$216,500
Elder abuse prevention services, public education, and training through Lifespan Elder Abuse Prevention Program	\$200,000
Hebrew Home at Riverdale	\$200,000
Matching federally funded model projects and/or demonstration grant programs	\$175,000

Livable New York Initiative	\$122,500
New York State Adult Day Services Association, Inc.	\$122,500
EAC/Nassau Senior Respite Program	\$118,500
Riverdale Senior Services, Inc.	\$100,000
Emerald Isle Immigration Center, Inc.	\$100,000
Foster Grandparents Program	\$98,000
New York Foundation for Senior Citizens Home Sharing and Respite Care Program	\$86,000
Home Aides of Central New York, Inc.	\$71,000
New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc., for the Patients' Rights Hotline and Advocacy Project	\$31,500

* Funding appropriated to MCCAP is disbursed to the following programs: Medicare Rights Center (\$793,000); New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc. (\$354,000); New York Legal Assistance Group (\$222,000); Empire Justice Center (\$155,000); Community Service Society (\$132,000); and Legal Aid Society of New York (\$111,000).

A. AID TO LOCALITIES

New and additional funding was also appropriated under Aid to Localities for many State and local programs for seniors in this year's budget.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Community Services for the Elderly Program

Restored: \$25.296 million

Add: \$2.5 million

Total: \$27.296 million

The Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) Program helps to improve the capability of communities to support elderly people in need of assistance so that they may remain in their homes and actively participate in family and community life. CSE also works to reduce the heavy reliance on institutions as the first-choice method to care for older adults, therefore reducing the public expense of caring for the needs of older New Yorkers. Eligible services available to counties include, but are not limited to, meals, transportation, social adult day services, case management, personal care, respite, friendly visiting, and minor residential repairs.

NYConnects: Choices for Long-Term Care Program

Add: \$8 million

NYConnects provides information and referrals to the elderly, as well as their caregivers, families, friends, and neighbors, about long-term care services and support options in New York State. The additional funding will be used to help expand the program, making it a one-stop, “No Wrong Door” access point to services across many agencies. With this approach, redundant questions and forms will be eliminated, and individuals will be more efficiently connected to services they are eligible for.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Restored: \$690,000

Add: \$500,000

Total: \$1.19 million

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) is an effective advocate and resource for older adults and persons with disabilities who live in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other licensed adult care homes. The program is administratively housed at the New York State Office for the Aging, and each local Ombudsman Program is led by a designated ombudsman coordinator who recruits, trains and supervises a corps of volunteers. There are currently more than 1,000 ombudsmen statewide who advocate for residents by investigating and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of residents.

The additional funding must first be offered to those counties currently operating a long term care ombudsman program. Any funding that is refused by the counties will be added to the base program funding.

**New York Foundation for Senior Citizens
Home Sharing & Respite Care Program**

Restored: \$86,000

Add: \$86,000

Total: \$172,000

The New York Foundation’s free Home Sharing Program helps link adult hosts with extra bedrooms in their homes or apartments with appropriate adult guests to share their space. The Respite Care Program provides temporary relief for primary caregivers of the elderly. Home attendants assist seniors in a number of ways, including personal care and hygiene, housekeeping, shopping, cooking, laundry, and escort.

**New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.
Patients’ Rights Hotline and Advocacy Project**

Restored: \$31,500

Add: \$31,500

Total: \$63,000

The New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc. runs a Patients’ Rights Hotline and

Advocacy Project to provide information and assistance for patients to inform them of their rights as well as advocate on their behalf while in the hospital.

NEW FUNDING

Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island \$312,000

The Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island (JCCGCI) is a community-based organization serving individuals and families in Brooklyn with a wide range of social services, as well as capacity-building support to other community-based non-profit organizations throughout New York City. Services for seniors include: senior centers, home care services, transportation, case management, home delivered meals, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for senior immigrants, a Medicare Part D Help Center, friendly visiting programs, and various services for Holocaust survivors.

Samuel Field YM & YWHA, Inc. \$100,000

The Samuel Field Y (SFY) provides a full range of camping, mental health, educational, and recreational activities for over 35,000 individuals in 36 different sites throughout greater Northeast Queens and Western Nassau. The SFY Neighborhood Senior Center offers social, recreational, and educational programs and support services for older adults.

Meals on Wheels Programs & Services of Rockland, Inc. \$50,000

Since 1974, Meals on Wheels has delivered more than eight million meals to homebound Rockland residents who are unable to shop or prepare their own food due to advancing age, illness, or physical disability. Over 900 meals are prepared in the central commissary daily to support its programs and contracts.

B. RESTORATIONS

Elder Abuse

This year, \$200,000 was restored to Lifespan for activities related to preventing and helping the victims of elder abuse. Lifespan, a component of the Elderly Abuse Education and Outreach Program, provides services related to elder abuse prevention services, public education, and training.

C. ARTICLE VII

The SFY 2015-2016 Budget also had a significant impact on the rules and provisions of various aging programs and services; these changes were outlined in Article VII.

Office of Community Living Feasibility Study

In this year's Executive budget, the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) proposed to embark on a feasibility study to seek public input about the creation of a State Office of Community Living. The goal of the Office would be to provide improvements in service delivery, and improved program outcomes that would result from the expansion of community living integration services for older adults and all persons with disabilities.

In addition to examining the federal initiative to create the Administration on Community Living, as well as efforts within and outside of New York State to expand and coordinate services supporting community living integration, the Enacted Budget set forth the following parameters for the design of this study:

- The Director of NYSOFA, in collaboration with other state agencies, must consult with stakeholders, providers, individuals and their families to gather data and information on the creation of an Office of Community Living. Areas of focus will include, but not be limited to:
 - furthering the goals of the governor's Olmstead plan;
 - strengthening the No Wrong Door approach to accessing information and services;
 - reinforcing initiatives of the Balancing Incentive Program;
 - creating opportunities to better leverage resources;
 - evaluating methods for service delivery improvements; and
 - analyzing the fiscal impact on services, individuals, and providers by creating the Office.
- In order to ensure meaningful public input and comment regarding the feasibility of the Office, a series of public meetings will be held across the State to ensure that stakeholders in all regions of New York are afforded an opportunity to comment.

The Director of NYSOFA will submit to the Governor, the Temporary President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly, a report by December 15, 2015 that outlines the results and findings associated with the Office's feasibility. The report will include the Director's assessment regarding whether the establishment of such an office would be beneficial to the populations served, and the State as a whole.

IV. ROUNDTABLES/HEARINGS

A. Combating Elder Abuse through New and Innovative Strategies

In recent years, the Assembly has worked diligently to increase awareness of the many forms of elder abuse, including physical, verbal, sexual, emotional, and financial. On May 18, 2015, the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging held an important roundtable discussion to examine new and innovative strategies to combat elder abuse. The goal of the roundtable discussion was to learn how the State can better help those victimized by elder abuse, and to find ways to help prevent it from happening in the first place.

The Committee invited discussion among invited speakers, including representatives from the New York State Office for the Aging and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, to gain various perspectives on this tragic problem that impacts thousands of older New Yorkers each year. One of the highlights from the discussion included the need for a public awareness campaign to help educate New York seniors and their families about the signs and dangers of elder abuse. As a result on this conversation, new legislation (A.7612-A; Cymbrowitz) was passed this year which authorizes a public education campaign to focus on the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, where suspected elder abuse can be reported, and contact information for programs that can help.

B. Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs): Preparing for the Future

On September 9, 2015, the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging held an important roundtable discussion to evaluate the current model for the Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) program and discuss whether updates for the program will be necessary in the upcoming years. The goal was to stimulate conversation about how to keep NORCs a vital part of the continuum of community-based care, including a new proposal set forth this year (A.7999; Cymbrowitz). The Committee invited discussion among invited speakers, including the Director of the New York State Office for the Aging, as well as several other important stakeholders who were able to offer their perspective on how the State can better assist and support NORC programs as they help older New Yorkers stay in their communities.

C. Update on New York State Office for the Aging's Study on the Benefits of Creating an Office of Community Living

The enacted SFY 2015-2016 Budget included the Executive's proposal to study whether an Office of Community Living could provide value to older adults and persons with disabilities living in the community. If so, this study would also recommend what form

such an Office could take. As a condition of approving this exploratory endeavor, the Legislature required a series of public forums across the State to ensure that providers and consumers of services would have their voices heard. The first part of this study was a survey of providers and consumers that closed as of September 30, 2015. The series of public forums commenced September 21 and the last was held on October 7, 2015.

On October 20, 2015 in New York City and October 27, 2015 in Albany, the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging conducted hearings, in conjunction with the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities, the Assembly Subcommittee on Community Integration, and the Assembly Subcommittee on Outreach and Oversight of Senior Citizen Programs, to discuss the status of the study regarding the feasibility of an Office of Community Living conducted by the New York State Office for Aging (NYSOFA). The Committee sought input from the communities impacted to better understand the level of public engagement thus far and the process being utilized to complete such study. The Committee heard testimony from the Executive Deputy Director of NYSOFA, as well as important stakeholders in both the aging and disability services communities.

D. The Effects of Elder Abuse on Individual Seniors and their Families

On November 13, 2015, the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging held a roundtable discussion in Rochester, New York to discuss the effects of elder abuse on seniors and their families. The goal of the roundtable was to better understand the personal cost of elder abuse on seniors and their families in terms of lost savings and negative health outcomes. Invited guests included many local organizations that work to help older New Yorkers impacted by financial exploitation.

E. Examining the Prevalence of Poverty among our Senior Citizens

On November 18, 2015, the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging, in conjunction with the Assembly Standing Committee on Social Services, the Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, the Assembly Subcommittee on Community Integration, and the Assembly Subcommittee on Outreach and Oversight of Senior Citizen Programs, conducted a hearing to better understand the causes, risk factors, and impact of poverty among senior citizens in New York State.

The goal of the hearing was to understand the causes and risk factors of poverty among senior citizens, especially those who are disproportionately impacted by poverty, in order to improve prevention efforts and find solutions to help those seniors currently trapped in poverty across the State. The Committee also sought to understand the impact of the assistance currently provided by state and local government agencies, as well as any gaps in such services, that may require review or that may lead to the creation of new initiatives that can reverse this trend. The Committee heard testimony from the Executive Deputy Director of the New York State Office for the Aging, as well as important stakeholders in both the aging and social services communities.

V. OUTLOOK AND GOALS FOR 2016

The 2016 Legislative Session promises to present many challenges to the Aging Committee. The Assembly has been working diligently to increase awareness of the many forms of elder abuse in the hope of preventing and providing better support to victims. The Committee on Aging will continue to address the severe challenges surrounding the issue, including the lack of awareness and information about the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, by working to increase opportunities to identify signs of abuse, increase outreach and education, and help empower seniors who are or may become victims of elder abuse.

With a growing number of seniors living independently, it is becoming increasingly important to ensure that older adults are safe at home and in their communities, and that they maintain their health and wellness. While medical advances have led to longer and healthier lives, there are still large numbers of older adults living in poverty. The Committee on Aging will remain dedicated to understanding the causes and risk factors related to poverty among senior citizens, and work towards reviewing existing services and new initiatives to better meet their needs.

The Committee on Aging will also work towards securing adequate resources for various services and programs that serve older adults throughout New York State. With more people living longer, and the aging of the “baby boom” generation, it is essential that we find a way to meet the increasing demand of such programs and ensure that older New Yorkers receive the services they need, both at home and in their communities.

APPENDIX A

Chapters of 2015 - Bills Signed into Law by the Governor

CHAPTER	ASSEMBLY BILL # (SPONSOR)	SENATE BILL # (SPONSOR)	DESCRIPTION
244	A.928 (Miller)	S.5905 (Serino)	Broadens the purview of the Committee for the Coordination of Police Services to Elderly Persons (the Committee) to provide for additional programs to be considered by the Committee to help combat the problem of crime against elderly persons as well as assist the elderly to avoid criminal victimization.
424	A.2124-A (Rosenthal)	S.5856 (Golden)	Requires the administering agency of the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) programs to develop and distribute informational material describing eligibility for and benefits of SCRIE and DRIE.
462	A.7820 (Cymbrowitz)	S.5702 (Serino)	Extends the authorization of the long term care ombudsman program to advocate on behalf of managed long term care participants until December 31, 2017.
553	A.7914-A (Cymbrowitz)	S.5721-A (Savino)	Grandfathers participants into the SCRIE or DRIE program at their current frozen rent for as long as they are in the program. Also creates a bridge for individuals whose rent increase exemption expired, and whose income made them ineligible to renew the benefit, but who then become eligible for the benefit once again under the increased income limit that took effect on July 1, 2014.
556	A.7791-A (Mayer)	S.5892 (Valesky)	Requires NYSOFA to develop a list, organized by county, of programs and services offered by local area agencies on aging, as well as contact information for the local area agencies on aging, and NYConnects. This list will be provided to hospital discharge coordinators throughout the State.
580	A.7247-A (Simotas)	S.5826-A (Lanza)	Allows an eligible surviving member of a household to apply to an agency administering SCRIE and DRIE to transfer the rent increase exemption from the deceased head of household to their own name, continuing the exemption as the new head of household.

APPENDIX B

Bills Vetoed by the Governor

VETO MEMO. #	ASSEMBLY BILL # (SPONSOR)	SENATE BILL # (SPONSOR)	DESCRIPTION
230	A.5352 (Cymbrowitz)	S.3923 (Savino)	Removes the requirement that a social adult day program be the recipient of a grant from NYSOFA in order to be subject to rules and regulations promulgated by NYSOFA. Also requires the Director of the State Office for the Aging to submit a report regarding the projected costs and benefits of establishing uniform standards and requirements with regards to social adult day programs in the State.
241	A.7612-A (Cymbrowitz)	S.5328-A (Serino)	Requires that NYSOFA, in consultation with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, conduct a public education campaign regarding elder abuse.
257	A.5318 (Cymbrowitz)	S.3968 (Serino)	Requires that the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health, establish a database of programs that have proven successful in supporting and treating elderly individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

APPENDIX C

Bills that Passed the Assembly in 2015

BILL #	SPONSOR	DESCRIPTION
A.294	Dinowitz	Would encourage businesses to retain workers who are informal caregivers and would provide such businesses with information on ways to retain workers who are informal caregivers.
A.300	Dinowitz	Would provide that the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) be consulted in the promotion of volunteer home visitation programs for elderly and invalid victims of violent crime.
A.1087	Dinowitz	Would require the appropriate rent control or administrative agency to send a notice of renewal to each head of household currently receiving an exemption under the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program. The notice would be sent no less than 30 days prior to the applicable renewal date.
A.1150	Rodriguez	Would establish the New York State Senior Center Council to address the challenges facing senior centers and to develop solutions to these problems.
A.1234	Dinowitz	Would rename and expand the “Geriatric Service Demonstration Program” to grant eligibility to providers of chemical dependency and compulsive gambling treatments for the elderly, and require the program to be administered in cooperation with the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.
A.4037	Robinson	Would require the New York State Department of Financial Services to create a program whereby financial institutions would be required to report suspected financial exploitation of a participating account holder to the appropriate adult protective services and law enforcement agencies.
A.5320	Cymbrowitz	Would facilitate enrollment in SCRIE and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program by requiring necessary forms for these programs and assistance to complete them to be made available in communities.
A.5332	Cymbrowitz	Would require any entity that oversees SCRIE and DRIE programs to implement and administer a program for the development of outreach initiatives in order to identify eligible individuals who are not participating in SCRIE and DRIE and then provide those individuals with information about the programs.

BILL #	SPONSOR	DESCRIPTION
A.5337	Cymbrowitz	Would require NYSOFA to develop model community programs materials to be distributed, upon request to local agencies on aging and to community organizations.
A.5354	Cymbrowitz	Would direct NYSOFA, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Labor, to develop and annually update a guide for businesses to hire, retain, and retrain mature workers.
A.7628-A	Barron	Would require the creation of an interagency council to develop a statewide plan on aging to account for the current and future needs of older adults.
A.8228	Cymbrowitz	Would allow a head of household, who has been dropped from the SCRIE or DRIE program due to a non-recurring item of income to reapply in the following calendar year and, if accepted, make rent payments at their previous frozen rent amount.

APPENDIX D

**2015 Summary Sheet
Summary of Action on All Bills Referred to the Committee on Aging**

Final Disposition of Bills	Assembly Bills	Senate Bills	Total
Bills Reported With or Without Amendment			
To Floor; Not Returning to Committee (Favorable)	0	0	0
To Ways and Means	23	0	23
To Codes	2	0	2
To Rules	2	0	2
To Judiciary	0	0	0
Total	27	0	27
Bills Having Committee Reference Changed			
Total	0	0	0
Senate Bills Substituted or Recalled			
Substituted		1	1
Recalled		0	0
Total		1	1
Bills Defeated in Committee	0	0	0
Bills Held for Consideration with a Roll-Call Vote	0	0	0
Bills Never Reported, Died in Committee	90	10	100
Bills Having Enacting Clauses Stricken	5	0	5
Motions to Discharge Lost	0	0	0
Total Bills in Committee	122	11	133
Total Number of Committee Meetings Held	6		