

THE NEXT CHAPTER NEWS

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2025



UNIVERSITY EXPRESS TRIVIA IN THE PARK!

**COUNTY EXECUTIVE
MARK POLONCARZ
COMMISSIONER
RANDALL HOAK**



FALL INTO HEALTH AND COMMUNITY

This fall, let's take a moment to slow down, care for our health, and celebrate the strength of our communities. October shines a light on the importance of breast cancer screenings, staying safe from domestic violence, and honoring Hispanic Heritage with special events hosted by the Hispanic Heritage Council. Right here in Erie County, the Health Department's Cancer Services Program offers free mammograms for adults ages 40–74 and at-home colon cancer screening kits for those 45–75—call (716) 858-7376 to learn more. The Health Department is also holding free COVID-19 vaccine clinics this fall, open to everyone with or without health insurance. As November arrives, we turn our attention to diabetes and lung cancer awareness, give thanks for the dedication of family caregivers, and honor Native American Heritage. You can take part by scheduling a diabetes screening, attending a lung health class or support group, or simply reaching out to a caregiver you know with a note of thanks. Our Department is also launching a Diabetes Prevention Program in East Aurora Oct 2nd, and our Nutrition Team is always available with resources, tips, and support to help you stay on track with healthy eating. Caregivers can also find support, training, and respite through our Caregiver Resource Center at (716) 858-8526. Together, these moments remind us to stay healthy, connected, and supported.

Autumn is for apple picking, pumpkin spice, and crisp walks in the leaves—not unexpected trips to the ground! As the days get shorter and sidewalks get slicker, a few simple habits can help you stay safe: wear sturdy shoes, use handrails, and keep your home well-lit. The good news is you don't have to do it alone—we offer Falls Prevention Programs that teach balance, strength, and simple techniques to help you stay steady on your feet. These classes are held in communities all across the county, so it's easy to join in, meet new people, and build confidence. A little prevention goes a long way, so you can keep enjoying family, football, and all the fun fall has to offer—without any slips spoiling it!

Upcoming classes

October 6th | United Church Manor | 1-3pm

October 22nd | Orchard Park Senior Center | 1-3pm

Call 716-858-2114 for more information

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



INSPIRE YOUNG VOTERS!

We are teaming up with the Erie County Historical Commission for a fun University Express Civic Engagement Project helping children under 18 learn how to cast their own mock ballot!



MORE DETAILS TO COME

REGISTER ONLINE

Erie.gov/aging or call 716-858-4601

EARLY VOTING OCTOBER 25- NOV 2

ONE NORTHTOWNS LOCATION (TBD)

TEDDY ROOSEVELT INAUGURAL HISTORICAL SITE

ONE SOUTHTOWNS LOCATION (TBD)

OPEN ENROLLMENT IS HERE! OCT 15-DEC 7



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Free and unbiased assistance

- One-on-one counseling by appointment
- Assistance with different Medicare plans
- Long term care insurance
- Prescription drug coverage assistance
- Resources for the uninsured
- Assistance with appeals
- Referrals to agencies



**Erie County Department for the Aging
Health Insurance Information &
Counseling Assistance Program
(HIICAP)**



**CALL US
716-858-7883**

ERIE.GOV/AGING



THE DISH

Messages from our Nutrition team

We will be starting new evidence-based classes in 2026 called BINGOCIZE! The class combines the game of Bingo with exercise, nutrition & health information! We will be scheduling classes starting early next year.

Cooking with SASS will also be getting an update in 2026! It will now be a 3-week site-tailored workshop with a bank of cooking topics to choose from. A few of the choices will be: Cooking on a Budget, Cooking for Fun, Cooking for One or Two, or a Create your Own Topic! Stay tuned for scheduling information!

A Cooking with SASS class will be starting on Tuesday, October 7th (4 weeks) from 1-2pm at St. John's Community Church in Eden. This will be the current series focusing on utilizing easy-to-use appliances to prepare meals.

Our University Express Nutrition class for the Fall semester - "Where's the Beef? Vegetarian Cooking for Even the Most Committed Carnivore". Class dates are October 22nd, 23rd, 29th, November 3rd and December 12th at the Amherst, Hamburg, Schiller Park, Akron-Newstead and Orchard Park Senior Centers, respectively. Check out the Fall 2025 University Express catalog or the Erie County Dept. for the Aging website for more details.

Many upcoming special meals for the holiday season!

Tuesday, October 7th is our Oktoberfest meal
Friday, October 31st is our Halloween meal
Friday, November 7th is our Veterans Day meal
Tuesday, November 25th is our Thanksgiving meal
Wednesday, December 17th is our Christmas meal
Friday, December 19th is our Welcome Winter meal
Wednesday, December 31st is our New Year's meal



NATIONAL CASE MANAGEMENT WEEK OCTOBER 12-18

The theme, Guiding Journeys, couldn't be more perfect to describe our team. Our case management team walks alongside older adults every step of the way—offering guidance, support, and reassurance. It's a reminder that every journey is unique, and having someone to help light the way can make all the difference.

Guiding Journeys is also a celebration of the hard work our team puts in every day. In September, during Healthy Aging Month, Senior Case Manager Rodtrice Matthews was highlighted for her dedication, giving us a glimpse into the vital work she does. That same month, our in-house team and contracted agencies came together for a day of learning, equipping themselves with new knowledge to better care for older adults—and themselves. Case management helps older adults maintain independence, dignity, and quality of life. Case managers connect residents with vital resources, including home care services, transportation, nutrition programs, health screenings, social activities, and caregiver support. Each case manager oversees more than 100 clients across Erie County, ensuring that every individual receives personalized attention and support. Our contracted agencies are also a critical part of this network, helping us reach as many people and areas as possible throughout the county.

Among them is Rodtrice Matthews, who not only manages case managers and ensures compliance with state regulations, but also provides training and support for contracted agencies. She maintains her own caseload, conducting service monitoring calls to make sure clients receive the highest quality of care.

For many older adults, a call from Rodtrice or her team can mean the difference between feeling overwhelmed and feeling supported. Their work ensures that no one slips through the cracks, giving every individual the chance to age with dignity, security, and peace of mind.



FOCUS GROUP

FOR THOSE AGES 60+

Tuesday, October 7th

4:45-5:45PM

Hamburg Public Library

THE ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING'S
RESEARCH TEAM WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

**SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR
COMMUNITY AND EVERYDAY LIFE!**

MORE DATES/LOCATIONS/TIMES AVAILABLE AND BEING SCHEDULED
REGISTER ONLINE AT erie.gov/aging
OR CALL 716-858-2776

HEAP OUTREACH INFORMATION

Early Outreach Applications:

Pre-typed black & white forms started mailing on September 2, 2025. NYS will continue sending them in batches over the next few weeks to households eligible for early applications.

SNAP/TA Recipients – HEAP Autopay:

- Eligible recipients will have benefits in the system by the end of October.
- Important: Even if approved, benefits cannot be paid or promised to utility/non-utility companies until November 3, 2025 (tentative).

Public Opening – Regular Benefits:

- HEAP opens to the public on November 3, 2025 for regular benefits.
- Individuals who didn't receive an early outreach application or autopayment can apply at this time.

Emergency Benefits:

- Expected to begin on January 2, 2025.

Program Close:

- HEAP will close in April 2025 (exact date TBD).

⚠ Please Note: All dates and details are tentative and may change at any time.

💡 Tip: Keep an eye on your mail for early applications and check your SNAP/TA case if you think you may be eligible for autopay.

Our outreach team will be in the community over 20 different times in October/November. Visit the calendar online at erie.gov/aging under the "About Us" tab or call our NY Connects line 716-858-8526.

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVER APPRECIATION MONTH!

November is the month to show appreciation and support to caregivers. There are approximately 63 million, unpaid, caregivers in the United States. In honor of the National Caregiver Appreciation Month, we would like to thank caregivers for their hard work, selflessness, dedication, and unconditional love they provide to their loved ones.



Supports available! Contact us today!!

Phone: (716)858-8526

Website: <https://www3.erie.gov/aging/caregiving>

E-mail: caregiver@erie.gov



The Fall Semester is Here! 🍁

Discover something new this season with University Express! Pick up your catalog at your local senior center or library, or browse online at erie.gov/universityexpress. We're offering over 400 classes both in-person and online, plus six exciting field trips, our beloved Puzzlepalooza, and so much more!

Don't miss our next **Trivia in the Park on Wednesday, October 16 at 12 PM in the Commissioner's Cabin at Chestnut Ridge Park**. Sign up online or call 716-858-6897 to reserve your spot—fun and friendly competition guaranteed!



EXPLORE AND SERVE

ERIE COUNTY RSVP CURRENT MEMBERS

VOLUNTEER FAIR

Wednesday November 5th

1-3pm

Resurrection Life Food Pantry
2145 Old Union Road Cheektowaga

Register at 716-858-7548



716-858-8526

Erie.gov/aging

Facebook- Erie County

Department for the Aging