

SPOP

Service Program for Older People
2024-2025 | ANNUAL REPORT



Letter from the CEO and President

Meaghan Atkinson



Catherine Thurston

We started fiscal year 2024-25 with the appointment of Catherine Thurston

as the third chief executive of SPOP in its 45-year history, following the retirement of long-time CEO Nancy Harvey. Our goals were to manage the leadership transition smoothly, develop strategies to increase efficiencies across the agency, and explore new programmatic opportunities, all while focusing on our central role as a mental healthcare provider. We were mindful of SPOP's essential role in the aging services and healthcare landscape, and all planning was conducted within the framework of the agency's mission and values.

We devoted the full year to a **strategic planning exercise**, guided by a committee composed of members of the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and staff. Following a review of SPOP's history, impact, strengths, and challenges, we brainstormed ideas and concepts and looked at financial projections. The final document reinforced the agency's foundational mission – *to enhance the quality of life of older adults and to foster their independent living through the delivery of comprehensive mental health and supportive services, advocacy and education* – and identified four areas of growth:

- **Advocacy:** To amplify our voice as a local, regional, and national advocate for older adults;
- **Social Health:** To embed social healthcare within all SPOP programs and services;
- **Education:** To strengthen the healthcare workforce by sharing our expertise; and
- **Capacity Building:** To foster strategic alliances with providers and advocates in the field.



NY City Council policy and legislative analysts visited SPOP for a conversation about aging and mental health. Catherine Thurston, SPOP CEO; Cristy Dwyer, Legislative Policy Analyst; Geordana Weber, SPOP Chief Program Officer; Janet Rosenberg, SPOP Chief Development Officer; Chloe Rivera, Senior Legislative Policy Analyst. front row: Sara Sucher, Senior Legislative Counsel; Sayemul Hamid, Senior Financial Analyst; and Christopher Pepe, Senior Legislative Counsel.

We have already taken concrete steps to support these goals. We built relationships with elected officials and **presented testimony at public hearings** on mental healthcare and aging. We **forged relationships** with other providers, coalitions, and funders and explored strategies to work together to support older adults.

We also offered expanded client screenings and **access to social healthcare at SPOP**, and we laid the groundwork for a new clinic satellite co-located at **The Riverside Church** in

Morningside Heights, due to open in early 2026. We launched a program to offer **training in aging and mental health** for providers throughout New York State, with a goal to build the workforce and expand access to treatment. And we created a structured, stipend-funded **internship program** for social work students working in older adult mental healthcare.

This annual report includes details, statistics, and client stories that illustrate the year's achievements and SPOP's impact.

None of this work would have been possible without the leadership oversight of our Board of Directors, the generosity of our donors, and the extraordinary dedication of our staff. We extend gratitude to every member of the SPOP community for their support and participation.

Catherine Thurston

Catherine Thurston, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Meaghan Atkinson

Meaghan Atkinson, PRESIDENT



The mission of Service Program for Older People is to enhance the quality of life of older adults and to foster their independent living through the delivery of comprehensive mental health and supportive services, advocacy and education.

SPOP Board of Directors and staff at at strategic planning retreat

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SPOP offers a continuum of outpatient services including individual and group psychotherapy, psychiatry, assessments, processing of all inquiries and referrals, and linkages to services to address social health needs. Based at our central offices, the clinic offers appointments on-site, via telehealth, and at satellite locations in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn.

Clinic, Community Programs, STRIVE, and Intake

Our staff is comprised of social workers, psychiatrists, intake specialists, and a psychiatric nurse practitioner. All are experienced in working with older adults and many are proficient in a second language. Clinical staff receive ongoing training in best practices, treatment modalities, and such topics as trauma, substance misuse, intimate partner abuse, or caregiver distress.

During the 2024-25 fiscal year the Clinic, Community Programs, STRIVE and Intake completed over 24,000 professional sessions for 928 individuals, for an average of 26 sessions per client over the course of the year.

The client population is generally low-income, medically frail, and socially isolated. Over 90% are not working, unemployed, or retired, and 78% are single, widowed, divorced, or not partnered.

Our top priority this year was to create new pathways to treatment for at-risk individuals. We expanded our capacity to treat symptoms relating to trauma; address social health needs such as housing or food insecurity; and provide time-limited intensive support for high-acuity clients.

Community Programs focus on a network of satellite clinic offices in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, which are co-located at older adult centers and other programs that serve an older population. Each satellite location is licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health, and seven are supported by the **Geriatric Mental Health program of NYC Aging**. Through these community partnerships SPOP is able to reach out to individuals

who would not otherwise have access to mental healthcare.

STRIVE is supported by a Geriatric Service Demonstration grant from the New York State Office of Mental Health, which enables SPOP to work in partnership with NYC Aging and the addiction treatment program at Metropolitan Center for Mental Health to provide integrated mental healthcare, linkages to medically-supported addiction treatment services, and services to address social health needs and support aging in place. Now in its fourth year, STRIVE has been successful in assisting clients to avert eviction, secure housing, acquire technology skills, and stabilize mental health symptoms.

Our intake office is the first stop for all incoming clients.

Our staff, many of whom are bilingual, are trained to guide individuals (and often their caregivers or family members) through the process while providing reassurance and listening closely for signs of urgent need. We use standard screening tools to assess for symptoms and we fast-track high-acuity cases. We also use a proprietary tool to assess for social determinants of health, and we draw on a database of city-wide resources to refer clients for additional support for meals, housing, financial assistance, socialization opportunities, or case management services.

The clinic offers free **Bereavement Support** for adults of all ages and backgrounds. Bereavement groups meet for ten-week cycles, either in person or via telehealth, and are co-facilitated by volunteers. All bereavement participants complete an intake interview and are connected to mental health services and other supports as appropriate.

During 2024-25 we:

- Completed over 24,000 professional sessions
- Provided professional services to 928 individuals
- Processed over 1,200 referrals and inquiries
- Assessed more than 400 individuals for social determinants of health
- Offered three peer-led bereavement support groups

IN A CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY, CLIENTS REPORTED THAT THEY:

- have made progress toward mental health goals (87%);
- are now able to manage daily challenges (71%); and
- are more satisfied with their level of independence (63%).

Marie is a 68-year-old Haitian-American woman who entered therapy after her sister noticed significant self-neglect following Marie's retirement from a call center two years ago. During her 8 years working there, Marie had endured daily verbal abuse from a supervisor who constantly criticized her work as "not good enough" and belittled her performance in front of colleagues.

Using Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Marie began connecting this workplace trauma to childhood experiences of being teased about her weight and feeling inadequate. Her therapist helped her identify negative beliefs like "I don't deserve nice things" and "Nothing I do matters" and used cognitive restructuring and behavioral activation to address both the trauma and self-care difficulties. Over six months, Marie has made meaningful progress — she established self-care routines, reconnected with her community, and began preparing home-cooked meals for family and friends.

Diane is an 82-year-old woman who told her therapist at the first session that she planned to die by suicide in two years. She did not want to be talked out of this plan, but requested therapy to help her find ways to cope with overwhelming sadness and despair as she lived with chronic pain. Diane was a serious artist who had recently stopped painting due to painful arthritis in her wrists and arms. The therapist helped Diane to understand how chronic pain, suicidality, inability to self-soothe, and grief over loss of her art were all intertwined. Diane was referred to a pain management specialist, and her therapist integrated art into treatment.

Diane gradually started leaving home more frequently to meet friends, visit museums and galleries, and participate in an art class at her local Older Adult Center. After 18 months of treatment at SPOP, she told her therapist that she was now able to create art again. When asked if she still planned to die by suicide in the near future, Diane responded that she did not want to let go of the idea but she no longer had a date in mind — because she had too much to do, create, experience, and think about right now.

George is a 72-year-old New Yorker who has been living with Major Depression and visual impairment for most of his adult life. Things worsened as he aged: he was told he was unable to work and he spent countless hours searching for services and assistance.

When George came to the SPOP PROS program he found much-needed relief, services, relationships, and purpose. The collaborative nature of PROS allowed George to create and drive his own treatment goals. This was a new experience for him, and he found that he enjoyed setting goals and participating in groups.

When George was younger he had worked in advocacy settings, and his recovery counselor encouraged him to explore similar opportunities now. After months of consistent group skill-building, guidance from the Vocational Specialist, and many conversations with the Certified Peer Specialist at PROS, George decided to pursue a career as a peer specialist. He recently enrolled in a training program and is enjoying the new challenge of learning. We expect that he will find a satisfying job placement when he graduates next year.



Caption for photo

Personalized Recovery Oriented Services/PROS

The *Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS)* program provides age-affirming psychiatric rehabilitation groups, psychiatry, medication management, meals, and recreation services for older adults with serious mental illness. PROS uses a unique model that encourages participants to identify and work toward personal goals, which might include employment, obtaining housing, learning to use a computer, or forming a friendship.

Our program is defined by three key features:

- We focus on recovery and rehabilitation, new concepts for many adults whose lives have been defined largely by their illness.
- Participants are encouraged to attend on a part-time basis while participating in other community-based activities and programs.
- We are New York State's only PROS program exclusively for older adults – which means that our participants are able to share their feelings about the challenges of aging, set age-appropriate goals, and form friendships among peers.

The PROS staff includes social workers, creative arts therapists, a psychiatrist and psychiatric nurse practitioner, a certified peer specialist, a vocational counselor, and recovery counselors.

In the spring of 2025 the state Office of Mental Health issued new guidelines for the program (“PROS Redesign”) which allow for greater flexibility in the way that we support older adults. We are now able to meet with participants in the community, escort them to appointments, and provide greater support to those who are disabled or transportation-challenged. This year the PROS program served 67 participants and provided 11,000 units of service. We offered a mix of on-site and telehealth services, served lunch three days each week, and

organized holiday celebrations throughout the year.

During 2024-25 we launched new rehabilitation groups on workplace readiness, nutrition, independent housing, and drama and art therapies, and we entered into an agreement for a group study with Rutgers University to participate in an evidence-based practice research study on positive psychology.



Ned, age 61, came to SPOP's PROS program following a prolonged psychiatric hospitalization. He had major depressive disorder, was reluctant to speak up, and described himself using self-deprecatory language, always focusing on his short-comings and sense of failure. He had a long history of being unhoused and was living in temporary housing when he was admitted to the PROS program.

Ned's goals were to find work and housing. He enrolled in psychiatric rehabilitation groups focused on nutrition and coping skills while we

guided him through the application process for housing.

Shortly after Ned moved into a new apartment -- his first real home in years -- he enrolled in a PROS group called "Stress Less Through Art." The group uses art therapy to teach coping skills and enable participants to explore and process their emotions.

Ned created the artwork shown above in response to a prompt from the art therapist to show all the different hats that one might wear in life - father, brother, friend - but not including

such roles as client, disabled person, hospital patient, or mentally ill person.

Here Ned depicts himself as an accomplished artist and cook. In fact he takes great pride in his creative artwork and recently started selling his drawings and paintings. He also enjoys exploring new recipes and cooking for himself and friends in his new home.

Art has allowed Ned to express himself more easily than through words, and this drawing tells a powerful story of recovery, new-found optimism, and self-worth.



Social work interns left to right: Ana Paula De Souza, Hannah Rothschild, Emily Hahn, and Isabella Heffernan, with Catherine Thurston.

This division oversees **training programs in aging and mental health** for community-based organizations, healthcare or aging services providers, professional consortia, and individuals and a **career pathway/student internship** program.

This year a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation enabled us to launch a state-wide training program. This project has helped connect us to aging services and mental healthcare providers throughout New York State, with whom we have strategized on ways to build the workforce, reduce stigma, and expand access to mental healthcare for older adults. The project started in January 2025, with all training webinars scheduled to start in September.

We collaborated with Uptown Interagency Council, Broadway Community, SAGE, and the offices of State Assemblymember Micah Lasher and State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal to provide interactive training webinars and workshops throughout the year, funded by the New York Foundation for Eldercare and Morningside

Heights Community Fund. We also presented at local and statewide meetings, including InUnity Alliance, Liveon-NY, and the Interagency Council of Developmental Disabilities.

We provided training to a total of 756 individuals during the fiscal year. Feedback from participants was positive, with 98% of respondents to a post-webinar questionnaire reporting that they had acquired new skills that they intended to use in their work.

We completed the first year of the career pathway program in June 2025. The program is funded by a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation (MCHF). Four interns were on site throughout the academic year. Three were from Silberman

School of Social Work at Hunter College and were funded by MCHF, and a fourth was awarded a fellowship from Touro University Graduate School of Social Work. All of the interns expressed a strong interest in working with older adults after graduation.

SPOP also supports social work students through the *Nancy Harvey Initiative (NHI)*, which provides funding for tuition, internships, or licensure preparation for those working in the field of older adult mental health. This year we welcomed the first *NHI* graduate as a full-time social worker at SPOP, and the fund also provided support for one first-year graduate student at Silberman School of Social Work.



Financial Support

SPOP participated in the AgeStrong NYC 2025 Advocacy Day at City Hall.

SPOP extends gratitude to the following elected officials, government agencies, and institutional funders.

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
New York City Council Member Shaun Abreu
New York City Council Member Gale A. Brewer
New York City Council Member Keith Powers
New York City Council Geriatric Mental Health Initiative
New York City Department for the Aging/NYC Aging
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
New York State Assemblymember Daniel J. O'Donnell
New York State Senator Cordell Cleare
New York State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal
New York State Senator Liz Krueger
New York State Office for the Aging
New York State Office of Mental Health
New York State Department of Health, Child, and Adult Food Care Program

Barker Welfare Fund
Vladimir and Araxia Buckhantz Foundation
Florence V. Burden Foundation
Columbia Community Service
The Dammann Fund
Jean and Louis Dreyfus Foundation
Mary J. Hutchins Foundation
Hyde and Watson Foundation
Charles & Lucille King Family Foundation

Metzger-Price Fund, Inc.
Morningside Heights Community Fund
Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
The New York Community Trust
New York Foundation for Eldercare
The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation
Edith M. Schweckendieck Trusts
Isaac H. Tuttle Fund
United Way of New York City



SPOP Staff as of June 30, 2025

Catherine Thurston, LCSW
 Stephen Beramsingh
 Johnny Lee
 Janet Rosenberg
 Geordana Weber, LCSW
 Arianne Dunstan-Halliday, LCSW
 Jessica Fertig, ATR-BC, LCAT
 Eeva Mikkola, MD
 Teresa Theophano, LCSW
 Alexandra Webb, LCSW
 Farah Jean-Philippe, LCSW
 Sandra Agredo, LCSW
 Claudia Alcantara
 David Ariza
 Lina Avalo, LMSW
 Mitchell Butin, MD
 Jennifer Campbell, LMSW
 Wayne Carrion, LCSW
 Joyee Chong Jr.
 Marissa Cross, LMSW
 Sarah Donato, LCSW
 Caitlin Downing, LMSW
 Max Feliu, LMSW
 Victoria Gambino
 Alana Glanell, LMSW
 Wendy Golub, LCSW

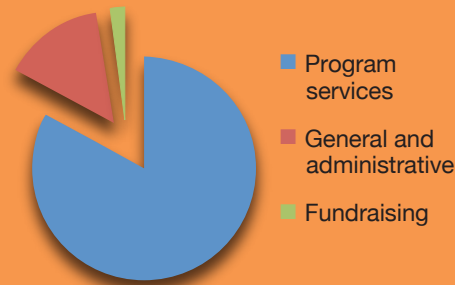
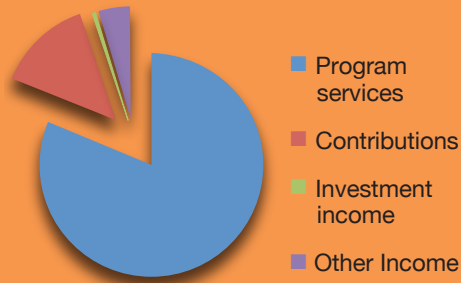
Chief Executive Officer
 Chief Administrative Officer
 Chief Financial Officer
 Chief Development Officer
 Chief Program Officer
 Senior VP for Intake and Admissions
 Senior VP for PROS
 Medical Director
 Senior VP for Community Programs
 Senior VP for Training & Initiatives
 Senior VP for Clinical Services
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker
 Director of Human Resources
 IT Junior Tech
 Assistant Director of PROS
 Psychiatrist
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Billing Specialist
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker
 Assistant Clinic Director
 STRIVE Social Worker
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Intake Specialist
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker

Kathleen Harris, LCSW
 Ruderliza Hernandez
 James Herrmann, LMSW
 Linda Jamison
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 Nydawattie Nanjad, LCSW
 Stephanie Olivencia
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 Maria Trocchio
 Ewelina Turlik, NPP
 Doris Urrea, LCSW
 Cindy Williams, LMSW

Assistant Director, Community Programs
 Assistant Director of Administration
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Recovery & Vocational Specialist
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Peer Specialist
 Training Coordinator
 Bilingual Case Opener
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Intake Specialist
 Recovery Specialist
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Director of Executive Administration
 Bilingual Receptionist
 Maintenance and Housekeeping
 Bilingual Rehab Aide
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Administrative Specialist
 Bilingual Senior Social Worker
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Psychiatric Social Worker
 Intake Navigator
 Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
 Bilingual Psychiatric Social Worker
 Psychiatric Social Worker

Financial

Year Ended June 30, 2025



REVENUE

Program services	\$5,837,794
Contributions	\$1,086,872
Investment income	\$126,859
Interest income	\$19,812
Other income	\$281,899
Total revenue and support	\$7,353,226

EXPENSES

Program services	\$5,507,218
General and administrative	\$882,382
Fundraising	\$119,159
Total expenses	\$6,508,759
Net assets, beginning of year	\$5,408,482
Net assets, end of year	\$6,252,949

A complete copy of the audited financial statement for Service Program for Older People, Inc. may be obtained by writing to SPOP, 302 West 91 Street, New York, NY 10024 or the NYS Dept. of State, 41 State Street, Albany, NY 12231.

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Offices & Clinic Satellite Sites

SPOP Main Office, Clinic, and Bereavement Support
302 West 91st Street, New York, NY 10024

SPOP PROS/Personalized Recovery Oriented Services
188 West 88th Street, New York, NY 10024

Satellite Locations:

EAST HARLEM

- Leonard Covello Senior Center, 312 East 109th Street

LOWER EAST SIDE/CHINATOWN

- Manny Cantor Center, 197 East Broadway

EAST VILLAGE

- Sirovich Senior Center, 331 East 12th Street

ROOSEVELT ISLAND

- Carter Burden Roosevelt Island Older Adult Center, 546 Main Street

MIDTOWN/CHELSEA

- The Edie Windsor SAGE Center, 305 Seventh Avenue
- Project FIND/Woodstock Neighborhood Senior Center, 127 West 43rd Street
- VISIONS at Selis Manor Senior Center, 135 West 23rd Street

UPPER WEST SIDE

- Project FIND Hamilton House, 141 West 73rd Street
- Red Oak Older Adult Center, 135 West 106th Street

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

- ARC Randolph Center, 108 West 146 Street
- ARC XIV Central Harlem Center, 130 West 140th Street
- ARC XVI Fort Washington Center, 516 West 181st Street
- Cothoa Luncheon Club, 2005 Amsterdam Avenue
- Riverstone Older Adult Center, 99 Fort Washington Avenue

BROOKLYN

- Heights and Hills, 81 Willoughby Street

BRONX

- SAGE Center Bronx, 1784 Prospect Avenue