



**Advocacy Update**  
**WI Caregiver Support Community Statewide Meeting**  
**May 23, 2023**

- **2023-2025 State Budget**

Earlier this month, the legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) passed a budget motion removing over 540 items from the Governor's Executive budget. **The items removed include some of the priorities of the Greater Wis. Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. and the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network** including (but not limited to): **Family Caregiver Tax Credit, Family and Medical Leave (FML) expansion and FML benefits insurance**, funding for implementation of a **minimum fee schedule** for certain home and community-based services (HCBS) provided through the state's Medicaid waiver programs (Family Care and IRIS), and funding for the **Wis. Personal Caregiver Workforce Careers program** to support a professional certificate program.

The JFC indicated these and other items removed from the budget will not be discussed further as part of the budget and will not be added back into the budget. This does not mean the proposals can never be discussed again and certainly does not mean the needs have gone away. What it means is any action taken on these proposals this session will have to take place as stand-alone legislation, separate from the budget process.

That said, there are still important aging network priorities in the budget. These items are not guaranteed to remain in the final budget and won't necessarily remain unchanged, but for now they are still at least under consideration. **Among the proposals under consideration are several of WAAN's priorities**, including (but not limited to):

- **Base funding increases for Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)**, as well as funding for:
  - **Caregiver support services**,
  - **Tribal Aging & Disability Resource Specialists (ADRS)**, and
  - Building a centralized ADRC website and database,
- Increasing **respite funding** by \$200,000,
- Sustaining the **5% rate increase for HCBS Family Care program providers**,
- **Rate increases for Direct Service Professionals** providing services in the Family Care program,
- **Rate increases for personal care workers**,
- **Increase funding for Adult Protective Services**,
- Funding to **increase the capacity of the Guardianship Support Center and to manage the training modules for future guardians**, and
- Increased **funding for mass transit aides and specialized transportation** for capital assistance grants.

JFC will likely be making decisions on these and other items still under consideration in the next month. **On May 9<sup>th</sup>, approximately 250 advocates participated in Aging Advocacy Day** (200 in-person and 50 virtually). **Advocates educated their state legislators about critical funding needs for ADRCs, family caregivers and paid care workers, home-delivered meal services funding** (which was not included in the Governor's budget), **and transportation supports**. The timing of our advocacy day could not have been more perfect. State legislators are currently busy drafting budget motions supporting funding for specific proposals they wish to see included in the final 2023-2025 State Budget. **We have received word that budget motions for all four of the Aging Advocacy Day priorities are in the works!** **Additionally, a budget motion is in the works for funding to build the capacity of the Guardianship Support Center.**

To ensure we keep this momentum going and help these priorities cross the finish line, your continued advocacy on these issues is needed. We cannot make this happen without YOU! **We need you to:**

- 1. Contact your legislators by e-mail, mail, or phone** and ask them if we can count on them to support these aging network priorities. If your legislator is not on the Joint Finance Committee, ask them to also contact their Joint Finance Committee budget buddy and urge them to support the proposals.
- 2. Identify FIVE other people in your Senate and/or Assembly district and help them send an e-mail or make a call regarding the aging network's priority issues.**
- 3. Commit to responding to any "Immediate ACTION Needed" messages** you get from me asking you to contact your legislators.

To obtain **email addresses for your legislators**, go here for the complete list of Senators:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2023/legislators/senate> and for your Assembly Representatives, go here: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2023/legislators/assembly>.

To send a message via the **U.S. postal service**

- Direct mail to your **state Senator** to: **P. O. BOX 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882**
- **Assembly Mailing Address** is: **PO Box 8952** (for Reps. with last names ending in A-L) **or PO Box 8953** (for Reps. with last names ending in M-Z), Madison, WI 53708

To reach your legislators by phone use the **state Legislative Hotline:**

- In Madison, dial 266-9960.
- Outside of Madison dial toll-free at 1-800-362-9472

**You can also find your legislator's phone number using the:**

- [Senate Office Directory](#)
- [Assembly Phone Directory](#)

Please, do not hesitate to reach out for any advocacy assistance you may need.

- **The Family Act**

A bill to provide workers with up to 12 weeks of paid leave has been reintroduced in Congress. The [Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act](#) (Family Act) would establish a program of paid family

leave in the U.S. The law would pick up where the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) left off by creating an insurance program—funded by joint contributions from workers and employers—to provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for themselves or a loved one or bond with a new child.

- **The CARE Act**

In 2017, some version of the Caregiver Advise, Record, and Enable (CARE) Act had been passed in 40 states, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. Since then, five additional states passed CARE Act legislation, bringing the total to 45 states and territories with CARE Act laws in place. The CARE Act supports family caregivers when their relatives go into the hospital and as they transition home. State CARE Acts vary, but in general they require hospitals to (a) record the name and contact information of the patient’s family caregiver (with the patient’s permission) in the patient’s electronic health record; (b) give advance notice to family caregivers about when the patient is to be discharged; and (c) educate and instruct family caregivers on any medical and nursing tasks (such as medication management, injections, and wound care) they are expected to perform for the patient at home.

We will again be pursuing CARE Act legislation in the 2023-'24 state legislative session.

- **Act on RAISE Campaign**

The Act on RAISE campaign – [powered by the National Alliance for Caregiving](#) – is focused on driving implementation of the actions outlined in the [National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#) (National Strategy). The campaign brings together stakeholders across the caregiving continuum (aging groups, patient advocacy groups, disability groups, and caregiving groups) to strengthen our nation’s first-ever National Strategy to support America’s 53 million family caregivers.

The campaign is focused on the following pillars:

- **Mobilize and align** stakeholders across the caregiving continuum around priorities and advocacy opportunities in support of the National Strategy.
- **Educate policymakers** about the actions outlined in the National Strategy and opportunities for implementation.
- **Raise awareness** of the far-reaching impacts of caregiving on families, communities, and the economy.

### **Campaign Goals**

- Accelerate the implementation of the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers.
- Strengthen federal-level coordination needed to support America’s 53 million family caregivers as envisioned in the RAISE Family Caregivers Act.

To sign on to the campaign go to: <https://www.actonraise.org/join-us/>

- **FY 2024 Older Americans Act (OAA) Funding**

USAgings’s (our national partner for area agencies on aging) most recent advocacy alert asks us to help ensure members of Congress recognize that funding for the aging network’s programs and services needs to be **significantly increased on a long-term basis** for three reasons: to serve the rapidly growing

number of older adults who need them, to meet the greater complexity of needs among the older adults you serve, and to address the workforce challenges that are affecting older adults' access to services.

**USAgging is calling upon Congress to double funding for** Title III B (Supportive Services), Title VI (Native American Aging Programs), and **Title III E** (National Family Caregiver Support Program). This is the level of funding these programs needed before COVID-19 and reflects what these programs absolutely need now as the COVID-relief dollars are running out.

### **Take Action:**

**Contact your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services.**

For tips on what to say, read USAgging's [appropriations request letter](#) and use their grassroots templates to customize your asks to reflect your agency/program: [AAA template](#) (you will need to modify this to reflect your work at the county/regional level) and [Title VI template](#).

Give your members of Congress a sense of how their communities are affected—take the time to localize what this funding means for the older adults and caregivers in your community, tribe or state. See [Wisconsin Members of 118th Congress](#) for contact information for your Representative and Senators.

**Engage Your Provider Network.** Urge your vendors/providers, advisory board members, caregiver coalitions, family caregivers and other important stakeholders to send their own letters to Congress. **Please do all you can to amplify the message and engage others who understand the value of OAA in their community!**