

Modernizing Wisconsin's Alzheimer's Family and Caregiver Support Program (AFCSP)

STATE ISSUE BRIEF

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Remove income-based restrictions to expand caregiver access and maximize funding.

Since 1985, Wisconsin's Alzheimer's Family and Caregiver Support Program (AFCSP) has been a vital resource for families caring for loved ones with dementia at home. The recent \$250,000 funding increase in the 2023-2025 budget demonstrates Wisconsin's commitment to supporting these caregivers. However, outdated income restrictions limit access to this critical program, leaving many families without the help they need.

WAAN's Position:

Update Wis. Stat. [§ 46.87](#) to eliminate means-testing or "income-based" eligibility for AFCSP to ensure equitable access and protect federal funding.

Why It Matters:

- Dementia care costs families nearly \$400,000 over a lifetime, with 70% of this burden falling on caregivers.
- Wisconsin's 580,000 unpaid family caregivers contribute an estimated \$9.2 billion in value annually.
- AFCSP provides essential services like respite, transportation, and in-home support, which delay more costly Medicaid-funded care.

Alzheimer's and Caregiving in Wisconsin

(source: Alzheimer's Association)

Wisconsin Alzheimer's Facts and Figures 2024

Please note: These numbers only account for those caregivers who are caring for a person with Alzheimer's.

# of Caregivers	205,000
Total Hours of Unpaid Care	297,000,000
Total Value of Unpaid Care	\$5,528,000,000

The Issue:

- **Federal Funding at Risk:** Starting in 2025, federal caregiver support funds through the Older Americans Act (OAA) will require state match funding without means-testing restrictions. Currently, more than half of Wisconsin counties use AFCSP funds to meet the OAA's 25% match requirement. Without a statutory update, counties will lose access to federal funds, jeopardizing essential caregiver services.
- **Underutilized State Funds:** Income restrictions prevent full utilization of AFCSP funding, leaving families who need support unable to access it.

Proposed Solution:

WAAN and the Department of Health Services (DHS) recommend eliminating means-testing from AFCSP. This change will:

1. **Protect Federal Funding:** Ensure AFCSP funds qualify as a state match for OAA caregiver programs, preserving essential federal dollars for Wisconsin families.
2. **Maximize State Resources:** Expand access to AFCSP for families in need and fully utilize available funding.

Call to Action:

Caregiving is a non-partisan issue affecting every district and community. Updating the AFCSP statute will safeguard federal funding, expand caregiver support, and honor the program's mission to aid Wisconsin's tireless family caregivers.

Be a champion for caregivers—support this statutory update to sustain and strengthen the AFCSP for Wisconsin families.

Caregivers are stepping-up each day to provide everything from grocery shopping and personal care to wound care, blood sugar monitoring and physical therapy exercises.



Many of them are doing this while working, managing health issues of their own or additional family members.

An updated statute can help the programs that support Wisconsin caregivers who are tasked with this challenging role.

Find this and other WAAN issue briefs at: <https://gwaar.org/issues-and-initiatives>

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Core member organizations

Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW) • Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter
Board on Aging and Long Term Care (BOALTC) • Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA)
Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A) • Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)
Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND) • Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)
Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) • Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)
Wisconsin Senior Advocates • Wisconsin Senior Corps Association (WISCA) • Wisconsin Tribal Aging Unit Association

Mission

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) works with and for all older adults by educating community members and policy makers on priority issues while advocating for meaningful change. Learn more at <https://gwaar.org/waan>.