



Volume 7, No. 42 October 28, 2025
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Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) News

Nice to Know

Reminder: Leadership Opportunities Starting January 2026!

Use Your Leadership Skills to Support Older People in Wisconsin

GWAAR is looking for thoughtful, civic-minded, energetic individuals to serve on its 10-member board. Board Members play a critical role in guiding and overseeing the agency's actions and initiatives.

Candidates must live outside Dane and Milwaukee Counties and be able to devote time and energy to the GWAAR's governance. Learn more: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2005629>

Questions? Contact GWAAR Executive Director John Schnabl, john.schnabl@gwaar.org

Abuse in Later Life Grant

Need to Know

Reminder: Direct Services Elder Abuse Training

Friday, November 14 | 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. | (rescheduled from 10-31)

Board Room, Onalaska Omni Center,
255 Riders Club Road, Onalaska, WI 54650

Registration: <https://bit.ly/3IY1WbL>

View the flyer: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008693>



Advocacy

[Janet Zander](#), Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator

Nice to Know

Volunteer Driver Program/Volunteer Driver Stories Still Needed

GWAAR and the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) are collaborating with legislators to create **legislation to protect volunteer drivers from denial of insurance coverage or higher insurance premiums**, solely because they are volunteer drivers. **Interest in this issue has been expressed by Sen. James (R-Thorp) who serves Senate Dist. 23.** His office has drafted legislation to protect volunteer drivers, and we are urging him to put the bill out for co-sponsorship soon. **Interest has also been expressed by Rep. Snyder (R-Weston) serving Assembly Dist. 85 and chair of the new Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services.** One of the ways we can demonstrate strong support for volunteer driver programs and drivers is through constituent stories! **We are grateful to the few people who submitted stories and need more.**

Please help us distribute the [story collection survey link](#) below and encourage more people to participate. Stories are needed from volunteer program administrators, volunteer drivers, volunteer driver program passengers, individuals with unmet transportation needs, and caregivers of people who use volunteer driver programs or need transportation services. These stories can help on many levels:

- Providing policymakers with real-life examples of challenges or benefits
- Showing where gaps exist in our current policies
- Demonstrating current and emerging issues
- Conveying the impact of a specific policy/policies

Specific information collected will remain private if individuals wish. If survey respondents are willing to share their story or let us share your story, they can complete the contact information section to provide us with a way to connect with them. Anyone with questions or who would like to speak to someone about their story can contact either:

- Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator at 608-228-7253 or janet.zander@gwaar.org
- Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist at 608-228-8092 or nick.musson@gwaar.org

For more information regarding the volunteer driver insurance issue, see WAAN's [State Issue Brief](#):
<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008441>

Thank you for completing the survey and/or sharing our story collection survey link:
<https://forms.office.com/r/ECJWtVa1TX>



Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services Update

The State [Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services](#) is set to begin meeting soon. The task force's first hearing (<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1950205>) is scheduled for Thurs., Oct. 30th from 10 a.m. to noon at the State Capitol in Rm. 300 Northeast. This first "informational hearing" is for "invited speakers only" and will focus on scams targeting older people. The hearing will be open for the public to attend (but not testify) and may be aired on [WisconsinEye](#) (though it is not currently scheduled as of 10-27-25). The invited speakers include:

- Wisconsin Elder Justice Coalition
 - Michael Austin, Wisconsin Department of Justice
 - Loreen Glaman, Co-Chair of Wisconsin Elder Justice Coalition & Retired Special Agent
 - Debi Leis, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
- Wood County Sheriff's Office
 - Lieutenant Scott Goldberg
 - Other Speakers Approved by the Chair
- AARP Wisconsin
 - Erin Fabrizius, Associate State Director
 - Courtney Anclam, Senior Program Specialist

Additional hearings are anticipated to be scheduled in Wausau, La Crosse, and another one in Madison.

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The Task Force Members are:

- [Representative Snyder \(Chair\)](#)
- [Representative Doyle \(Vice-Chair\)](#)
- [Representative Melotik](#)
- [Representative Gundrum](#)
- [Representative VanderMeer](#)
- [Representative Novak](#)
- [Representative McCarville](#)
- [Representative Taylor](#)

The task force plans to identify ways to improve the quality of life for older Wisconsinites and will focus specifically on programs, services, and policies that help older people maintain independence in their own homes, encourage social interaction and community engagement to combat isolation and loneliness, prioritize physical wellbeing and financial independence, and prevent elder financial exploitation. They intend to wrap up their work by the end of the calendar year. As specific dates, times, and locations are confirmed, we will share them broadly. **It is important for the task force to hear from older people, caregivers, and aging network professionals and board members around the state regarding the programs and services that are successfully helping people to remain living at home, as well as the challenges older people face as they plan to continue living in their homes.** If your Assembly Representative is serving on the task force, please reach out and congratulate them on their appointment and let them know you/your agency are available to serve as a resource to them.

See the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's [2025-2027 State Budget Comparison](#) to see the aging network's unaddressed budget needs (most of which align well with the charge of the new Elder Services Task Force). All of the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's (WAAN's) 2025 issue briefs can be viewed here: <https://gwaar.org/waan-issues-and-initiatives>.

SB 578 – Patient's Representative Legislation (Next of Kin)

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/sb578>

The Wisconsin Hospital Association is working with legislators again this session to pass legislation that creates "Patient Representatives" with the authority to consent to admissions to certain health care facilities without requiring a petition for guardianship or protective placement. This legislation is similar, but not identical to, [Assembly Bill 1088](#) which was introduced last session; opposed by GWAAR and other aging, disability, and legal advocates; and failed to pass in the Senate before the session ended.

SB 578 was introduced on Oct. 24, 2025 and referred to the Senate Health Committee (<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/committees/senate/2966>). **GWAAR and other aging, disability, and legal advocates are opposing this legislation** as we feel this legislation creates risk for patients and family members, has legal and operational issues, and does not resolve the issue it was designed to address (quick transition of hospitalized patients who have become incapacitated to make health care decisions, are medically ready to be discharged, and do not have a Power of Attorney for Health Care [POAHC]). This legislation circumvents the Wisconsin statutes and regulations specifically designed to safeguard the rights of individuals by giving "hospital appointed patient representatives" more authority than that given by an adult (via their POAHC documents) to their personally selected health care agent(s), and with no required court oversight. This legislation ignores the already existing process for obtaining a temporary guardian in Wisconsin, which would allow a decision-maker to be put in place much quicker than the permanent guardianship process, and provides court-oversight and timelines for consideration of permanent guardianship, if needed.

This legislation may be scheduled for a hearing soon by the Senate Health Committee or may be taken up by the new Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services which begins its work this week. Stay tuned for talking points and action alerts.

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FoodShare (SNAP) Update

As we head into the fourth week of the government shutdown, no Federal government funding deal has yet to be passed and negotiations on a potential short-term funding bill remain at a standstill in Congress. As we move ever closer to Nov. 21, the date the House passed continuing resolution (CR) set as how long the Federal government would have been funded (at FY 2025 levels), it is increasingly likely that an additional CR will be needed as Congress will need more time to pass all the FY 2026 spending bills.

Pressure on Congress to reopen the government continues to grow; **if no spending package passes by Nov. 1, there will not be enough funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or FoodShare benefits in Wisconsin, to provide benefits in November.** SNAP/FoodShare benefits are 100 percent funded by the federal government, and therefore, the federal government shutdown must end before members can begin getting benefits again.

This means FoodShare members will not get their monthly benefits on time in November. When the government reopens and federal funding for FoodShare is again available, work will begin quickly to start issuing benefits as soon as possible. **Although no November benefits will be issued, FoodShare members may continue to use any benefits currently on their QUEST card.** Benefits that are already on members' cards will not be removed because of the shutdown and members can continue to use their current benefits, if any, during the shutdown.

A Senate Republican introduced a bill to fund SNAP benefits for the duration of the shutdown, but Republican leadership has yet to endorse the bill, and Democrats have signaled they will not support funding bills without a fix for the Affordable Care Act premium tax credits at the heart of the shutdown debate. Additionally, Democrats and Republicans introduced bills to pay federal workers during the shutdown and prevent mass firings, but these solutions were rejected by the Senate.

According to the USDA, they are not legally able to use their contingency funds to cover regular benefits. Additionally, the USDA indicated that because SNAP benefits are fully Federally funded, there is no provision or allowance under current law for States to cover the cost of benefits and later be reimbursed.

Any Wisconsinite who needs additional food for their house or family can reach out to 211 for information and referrals to local services. 211 can be reached in any of the following ways:

- Dialing 211 or 877-947-2211.
- Texting their ZIP code to 898211.
- Visiting the [211 website](https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/) to search for services or chat with someone online who can help.

Local food pantries are likely to need additional financial support and food resources to meet the higher demand. Please help out where you can and encourage others to do the same. For the latest FoodShare news go to: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/news.htm>.

For additional information see: [Children & Families at Risk of Losing Critical Food Support - Kids Forward](https://kidsforward.org/wisconsin-children-families-workers-at-risk-of-losing-critical-food-support-due-to-federal-cuts/). <https://kidsforward.org/wisconsin-children-families-workers-at-risk-of-losing-critical-food-support-due-to-federal-cuts/>

Webinar: Federal Funding Fallout 2025 Updates and Q&A

Friday, October 31 | 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

English registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFunds1031>

Spanish registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFundSpan1031>



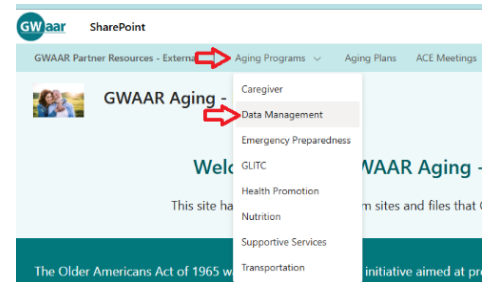
Data Management

[Carrie Kroetz](#), Data Management and Technology Coordinator

Nice to Know

Reminders

- All webinars are recorded and posted on the GWAAR Partners Resources site under Aging Programs/Data Management library for registered users.
<https://gwaar.sharepoint.com/sites/PartnerResources> | Aging Programs | Data Management
- The first of many End-of-Year review reports have been posted to the GWAAR SharePoint site under Aging Programs/Data Management library. Please review this and address any issues indicated for your Aging Unit (also, please review the 09-04-25 GWAAR PeerPlace EOY Series - General Errors to Review recording). If you have questions, please let [Carrie Kroetz](#), know.



Deadline Dates to know

- PeerPlace services entered and errors corrected – October 31
- September Claim – November 10 (revised date)
- 2026 Budget (yet to be posted) – due TBD
- FFY Variance Report – December 12

Elder Abuse Programs

[Donna Rosner](#), Elder Abuse Program Specialist

Nice to Know

Reminder: Attention Adult Protective Services (APS) Partners

It is the time of the year for this reminder! APS lead elder abuse agencies and fiscal please reach out to me directly at Donna.Rosner@gwaar.org regarding questions on use of your remaining elder abuse allocation. I also will be reaching out individually to counties that are underspent regarding whether they are interested in de-obligating their remaining funds.

Lead agencies that have exhausted all their funds for 2025, please contact me as well on the procedure regarding applying for additional funds. **APS Leads, please share this information with your fiscal.** On a side note, indicating that you will spend your funds is not sufficient to be considered for additional funds. Continue to submit monthly expenses to GWAAR fiscal and reach out to me directly at Donna.Rosner@gwaar.org if interested in being considered for additional funds.

Thanks for the important work that you all do!

Family Caregiver Support

[Bryn Ceman](#), Older Americans Act - Caregiver Programs Specialist

Need to Know

☀️ 2025 National Family Caregivers Month Toolkit Now Available!

The Wisconsin Family & Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) is proud to celebrate National Family Caregivers Month this November with the release of the 2025 Communications & Marketing Toolkit: Working Together to Advance the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers Across Wisconsin.

The Toolkit includes ready-to-use materials to help agencies and partners recognize and support Wisconsin's family caregivers.

🔔 Access the Toolkit

The 2025 NFCM Marketing Toolkit can be found in two convenient locations:

- On the GWAAR website:
<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008700>
- On the homepage of WisconsinCaregiver.org:
<https://wisconsincaregiver.org/data/media/935/nfcm-2025-toolkit.pdf>



Toolkit to
Highlight and Support
Family Caregivers in
Wisconsin



📖 Read the full press release here: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008735>

Let's make sure every Wisconsin caregiver feels seen and supported—this month and all year long! 💙

Nice to Know

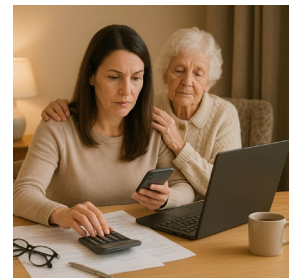
📖 Webinar reminder: Aging with a Plan – Preparing to Care

Wednesday, November 5 | 12:00 p.m.

Join USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, Center for Advancing Family Caregiver Financial and Workplace Security on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. for a discussion with Sharona Hoffman, JD, LL.M., SJD, author of *Aging with a Plan* (2022) and Professor of Law & Bioethics at Case Western Reserve University.

This session will cover practical strategies for family caregivers managing loved ones' financial affairs, including key legal documents, when to consult an elder law attorney, and how caregivers can safeguard their own financial well-being.

Registration: <https://bit.ly/4oo2RkM>



♥ Research Opportunity for Caregivers

A research team from Vanderbilt University and the University of Virginia is recruiting caregivers (age 18+) who have advised, consulted, or collaborated on research.

The goal: to understand what helps or hinders caregivers' participation in research as partners.

Participants will complete a 1.5-hour phone or video interview and receive compensation for their time.

📄 Learn more or apply:

https://virginia.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3qRm6CPoZRZ6mkm

📧 Questions? CaregiverCAREstudy@vumc.org | 📞 (615) 421-4210

Please share this opportunity with caregivers who may be interested—especially those in rural areas.

Are you a caregiver who has advised, consulted, or collaborated on research?



We want to interview you!

About the interview:

- One 1.5 hour video or phone interview
- You will be paid for your time



Click [here](#) or scan code to apply

You qualify if you:

- Support or previously supported an adult with a long-term health condition
- Have advised, consulted, or collaborated on research while being a caregiver
- Are at least 18 years old and live in the U.S.A.

To learn more:
CaregiverCAREstudy@vumc.org
(615) 421-4210



Fiscal

[Carrie Kroetz](#), Data Management and Technology Coordinator

Need to Know

Deadline Dates to know

- PeerPlace services entered, and errors corrected – October 31
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Health Promotion

[Angie Sullivan](#), Older Americans Act - Health Promotion Program Specialist

Need to Know

Reminder: Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar – next week!

Tuesday, November 4 | 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. (10:30 - 11 a.m. Optional Discussion)

As we approach the end of the year, I invite you to join me for our final Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar of 2025 on Tuesday, November 4. This session will include important program updates, highlights from across the network, and a look ahead to 2026.

Please plan to attend live virtually if your schedule allows - it's a great opportunity to connect, share ideas, and celebrate the progress we've made together this year. While the session will be recorded, attending live offers the best chance to engage in real time.

You'll find the agenda below. I look forward to seeing you there!

Health Promotion Quarterly Webinar Meeting link: [Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 237 124 726 503 4 | Passcode: Fg7RG7PL

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Agenda:

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introduction

Angie Sullivan MS, CHES, OAA Consultant – Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (III-D), GWAAR

9:05 a.m. Vivo Recap and Example from the Kenosha Cty ADRC

Liz Kemp, Director of Research and Customer Outcomes

9:30 a.m. Best Practice Health Promotion Examples from the Aging Network

- Social Connection Examples from a Rural County, Amy Roemhild, ADRC Supervisor of St. Croix County
- Reframing Health Promotion Recruitment Communications, Michelle Erdmann, Caregiver, Dementia & Prevention Manager of the ADRC of Brown County

10:00 a.m. GWAAR Updates

Angie Sullivan, OAA Program Specialist GWAAR

10:15 a.m. Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging Updates

Amie Rein, Health Promotion Program Coordinator

10:25 a.m. Wrap – Up

Optional: 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Networking and Open Discussion

Nice to Know

Pop-Up Falls Free® Wisconsin Coalition Webinar

Tuesday, November 18 | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Learn about falls prevention programs happening throughout Wisconsin and what one(s) might be a good fit for your community!

Webinar registration: <http://bit.ly/FFWIPopUp>

View the flyer: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008791>



Stepping On December Facilitator Training

December 2-4 | 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The deadline to apply for this training is October 28 (TODAY)

Due to high demand, WIHA has added another Stepping On facilitator training this year! Now is the time to spread the reach of your Stepping On program and train additional facilitators. WIHA is offering a virtual facilitator training.

Facilitator requirements:

- Must be a healthcare professional, aging network professional, fitness specialist or other professional that works with older adults.
- Must be employed by or volunteer for a registered program provider or license holder.
- Must hold at least one community workshop every 12 months.
- Must identify an eligible co-facilitator

Not able to attend this training? Keep an eye out for WIHA's 2026 facilitator training schedule coming soon!

Training application (due by Oct. 28): <https://wiha.wufoo.com/forms/s8d8tpv0cls7ng/>

Stepping On
© Clanton, Spahn & Mahoney 2022

Reminder: Social Connection Awareness Week Promotional Materials

Promotional resources for Social Connection Awareness Week (November 9 -15, 2025) are now available!

This year's theme is: From Neighbors to Networks - Connection Happens Here. Check out the resources on our website, including:

- Letter to the editor
- Newsletter article
- Press Release
- Social media schedule & graphics
- BINGO card activity - for professionals and consumers

Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection Awareness Week Promotional Materials - <https://connectwi.org/for-professionals/events/>



Nutrition

[Pam VanKampen](#), Older Americans Act - Nutrition Program & Senior Center Specialist

Nice to Know

Nourishing Connections: Celebrating Food, Family, and Culture

In November we honor Diabetes Awareness Month, Native American Heritage Month, Family Stories, and Caregiver Month. It's a great time to celebrate the powerful connection between food, family, and culture. From managing diabetes to embracing Native traditions and recognizing the vital role of caregivers, each story reminds us that nourishment is more than what's on our plate—it's how we connect, support, and sustain one another.

View November NOURISH Step: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008784>

Enjoy your favorite holiday traditions while still feeling your best! See how simple it can be to balance celebration with wellness through small, practical choices. Get ready for the holidays while taking a NOURISH Step!

View December NOURISH Step: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008788>

Need additional baking tips for apples or pumpkins? There are plenty to be found in our October NOURISH Step resources!

View October NOURISH Step: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008665>

For additional information and resources, including landscape versions of these resources, visit: <https://gwaar.org/nourishstep>

Or find the 2025 Monthly Nutrition Ed Handouts on the GWAAR SharePoint site:

<https://bit.ly/4oFMzZn>

Eat Well, Age Well Cookbook:

<https://gwaar.org/eat-well-age-well>



Supportive Services

[Angie Sullivan](#), Older Americans Act - Health Promotion Program Specialist

Need to Know

Reminder: OAA Title III-B Legal Services Notice of Award

Following a comprehensive review and scoring process, Legal Action of Wisconsin Inc. has been awarded the OAA Title III-B Legal Services funding. As part of their proposal, they will be coordinating with Judicare to provide services to the Northern Wisconsin counties and 11 tribes. The contract period will begin on January 1, 2026; it is a one-year contract with the option for four one-year extensions.

As a contracted OAA Title III-B legal services provider, Legal Action of Wisconsin Inc., will be expected to:

- Deliver legal assistance to individuals age 60 and older, with no income or asset test;
- Provide services that address priority legal issues affecting the economic and personal independence of older adults;
- Offer participants to make a voluntary contribution, as required under the Older Americans Act.

The award is contingent upon successful execution of the contract and continued compliance with all federal and state guidelines, OAA provisions, and GWAAR policies.

More logistical information will be communicated prior to January 1st to the local Aging Units. For more information, contact Angie Sullivan OAA Program Consultant GWAAR at angela.sullivan@gwaar.org.

Transportation

[Nick Musson](#), Older Americans Act - Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist

Nice to Know

Support Needed: Protect Wisconsin's Volunteer Drivers Organizational Sign-On Opportunity – LRB-4850

Volunteer drivers provide thousands of essential rides each year for older adults, people with disabilities, and others who can't drive—connecting them to medical care, groceries, and community life.

Unfortunately, many are losing insurance coverage or facing steep rate increases simply for volunteering. Some insurers classify mileage reimbursement as “commercial activity,” even when volunteers receive no pay.

We're excited to share that Senator Jesse James is preparing to introduce LRB-4850, a proposal to protect volunteer drivers from unfair auto insurance treatment. This bill ensures insurers cannot cancel, deny, or raise rates solely because someone volunteers their time to transport others. **To support LRB-4850, we're circulating a statewide sign-on letter urging Wisconsin legislators to pass common-sense protections for volunteer drivers.** LRB-4850:

- Defines “Volunteer Driver” as an individual who, without compensation other than reimbursement for actual expenses, provides transportation under the direction, sponsorship, or supervision of a qualifying entity (such as a governmental or charitable organization).
- Prohibits insurers from canceling, refusing to issue, refusing to renew, or increasing premiums for automobile insurance solely because the policyholder is a volunteer driver.

Sign-On Details

1. Review the **Volunteer Driver Sign-On Letter**: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008758>
2. Add your organization's name, contact information, and signature.
3. **Email your signed copy back to me by October 31, 2025**
4. Please share this letter with other organizations, volunteer driver programs, and partners who may be affected or supportive.