



Volume 8, No. 2 January 13, 2026
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✓ Save the date

Next ACE Meeting – January 14

1:30 – 3:00 p.m.



Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) News

Nice to Know

First quarter ACE meeting tomorrow

Wednesday, January 14 | 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

The first quarter ACE (A Commitment to Excellence) meeting is almost here! Join us for updates including the latest from the Reframing Aging Initiative and an update about home-delivered meals.

View the agenda: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewfile/id/2008843>

Save the dates for 2026 ACE meetings

- Wednesday, April 8, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 8, In-person at Stevens Point, 10:00 – 2:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 14, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.



GWAAR closed Monday in observance of Martin Luther King Day

We will be closed on Monday, January 19 in observance of the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.



Reminder: National Center to Reframe Aging Training

These free, 1-hour webinars will introduce the key concepts of reframing and provide proven communications strategies that will reduce the negative health and policy impacts of ageism and ableism.

Registration is required.

These are the only two trainings scheduled in 2026.



-continued-

Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

[Reframing Aging and Disability in Wisconsin for Health Care Professionals](#)

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FzVArKUXSISUw0LZUn0HHw

This is tailored for health care professionals, but all are welcome.

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

[Reframing Aging and Disability in Wisconsin](#)

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TFO4fZzFSIO81sEKhjRaeQ

Reminder: Valentines for Wisconsin Veterans

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is asking for help showing veterans how much we appreciate their service and sacrifice by sending Valentine's Day cards to veterans living in WDVA facilities.

Since beginning this program in 2023, they have received over 80,000 Valentine's Day cards for members and veterans in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove, as well as to residents of the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program.

The valentines are hand-delivered by staff to the veterans, loved ones, and Gold Star families residing in WDVA facilities. Cards must be mailed no later than Jan. 31, to allow time to be distributed on Feb. 14. Due to allergies/dietary restrictions, do not include candy, food, or snacks.

Cards can be sent to:

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Attn: Veteran Valentines

PO Box 7843 Madison, WI 53707-7843

View the press release: <https://dva.wi.gov/press/valentines-for-wisconsin-veterans-2/>



We're Hiring: Veteran Self-Directed Program (VSDP) Care Consultant

Do you have a passion for supporting Veterans and helping them live independently? The Veteran Self-Directed Program (VSDP) empowers Veterans to choose their own caregivers, services, and supports so they can safely remain in their homes.

As a VSDP Care Consultant, you'll:

- ✓ Assess Veterans' abilities and needs
- ✓ Develop personalized care plans
- ✓ Assist with budgeting and purchasing goods/services
- ✓ Monitor service provision and provide ongoing support



This role involves travel across **North Chicago, Tomah, Madison, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis VAMC catchment areas. Ideal candidates will have a degree in Social Work or related field (Bachelor's required, Master's preferred) and be based in Central, South-Central, or South-Eastern Wisconsin.**

View the full job description: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008591>

View or share on LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/48tiHEF> | View or share on Facebook: <https://bit.ly/4iPGF1B>

To apply, send cover letter and resume to: VA Programs Manager, Lisa.Drouin@GWAAR.org

Call for Social Engagement Innovations

Submissions due Friday, January 30, 2026

ACL's Commit to Connect initiative, in collaboration with engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults, is launching a Call for Innovations to identify model interventions, programs, and services addressing social isolation and loneliness.

All submissions will be considered for inclusion in the Social Engagement Innovations Hub — a searchable clearinghouse of best practices and data-driven interventions, programs, and services promoting social connections across populations. Contributing to this hub will encourage adoption, replication, and awareness of programs to address social isolation and loneliness.

The current Call for Innovations is open through January 30. Before submitting your social connection examples, please read through the eligibility criteria and submission questions.

Questions? Contact Commit to Connect at info@committoconnect.org

Commit to Connect: <https://committoconnect.org/>

Additional information and Eligibility Criteria: <https://bit.ly/3LgPUvw>

Submission questions: <https://bit.ly/4pAylw>

Submit your innovation: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LTFNDPP>



Advocacy

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

Nice to Know

Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget


Congress still needs to pass a total of nine (of 12) regular appropriations bills to fund the government before a Jan. 30 deadline. Back in November 2025, Congress included funding for the Agriculture, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction/VA in the continuing resolution (CR) that ended a 43-day government shutdown.


Early this week, the Senate voted to advance a three-bill (departments of Commerce, Justice and Interior; sciences and related agencies; and energy and water projects) minibus (a Congressional spending package that bundles together a few of the 12 annual appropriations bills) spending package; the House passed this same package last week. The Senate hopes to achieve final passage of this package by the end of the week. Once the pending minibus passes, Congress still has six appropriations bills to pass before the current continuing resolution (CR) expires.

House and Senate negotiators recently released text for a four-bill minibus package to fund **Financial Services, General Government, National Security, and the State Department.**

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**Urge your federal lawmakers
to protect and increase
funding for OAA and other
critical aging programs in their
final FY 2026 spending bill**
<https://bit.ly/3YDOnTf>





Unfortunately, lawmakers have yet to reach an agreement on the two largest bills: **Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)**. These two bills, which fund critical programs like the **Older Americans Act (OAA)**, comprise approximately two-thirds of the annual federal discretionary budget. Failure to pass these by January 30 will require either another short-term CR or trigger a partial government shutdown.

ACTION ALERT:

Use the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's (WAAN's) Action Alert to urge your federal lawmakers to protect and increase funding for OAA and other critical aging programs in their final FY 2026 spending bill: <https://bit.ly/3YDOnTf>

Disability Vote Coalition – Absentee and Early Voting webinar

Tuesday, January 20 | 12:00 – 12:45 p.m.

Absentee voting is a convenient way for many people to vote. The webinar will discuss how to request an absentee ballot for a specific election or the entire year. Topics include:

- Early in-person voting
- Important election dates
- Voting rights
- What to do when there's a problem at the polls, and more

Intended audience: people with disabilities, family members, caregivers, service providers.

Registration: <https://bit.ly/DVCLunchLearnJan2026>

View the flyer: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008875>



2026 Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Advocacy Day

Tuesday, February 3 | 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Event registration deadline Friday, January 23

Join Alzheimer's advocates from across Wisconsin to raise awareness and make sure that Alzheimer's and all related dementias remain a legislative priority in 2026 and beyond!

- Advocate for enhanced care and support services for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.
- Use Your Voice to share your story, family experiences, and the issues facing your community with policymakers.
- Empower the 110,900 Wisconsinites living with Alzheimer's and the 205,000 individuals serving as their caregivers.



More information and event registration: <https://alz-wi.quorum.us/event/25900/>

Survival Coalition – “Community Organizing to Maximize Power the Impact” – online training series

January 28, February 11, February 25 | 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

This 3-part, 9-hour training is free to members of the disability community in Wisconsin who want to explore the principles of collective action to impact issues important to the disability community. Whether it's cuts to Medicaid and SNAP, the lack of caregivers, quality education, or other issues important to the disability community, this training will give participants the connections and skills to have greater impact on public policy.



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

Sessions are 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. on the dates below and will not be recorded. Participation in ALL THREE sessions is strongly recommended by the organizers in order to improve effectiveness in community organizing. Registrants are encouraged to participate in groups because there will be opportunities for small group discussions.

This series will also serve as training to help attendees prepare for Disability Advocacy Day, which will be March 19 at Monona Terrace and the Capitol in Madison.

Session Dates & Registration

- Session #1 (January 28): Learning the basics of power, control, and how to motivate others.
- Session #2 (February 11): Identifying challenges and developing strategies for change.
- Session #3 (February 25): Forming cohesive groups and maximizing strengths for bigger impact

Questions about the trainings: Contact Jeremy Gundlach at jeremy.gundlach@wisconsin.gov .

Registration: <https://bit.ly/CommunityOrganizing2026>

View the flyer: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008874>

Reminder: Federal Funding Fallout2025: Updates and Q&A

Friday, January 16 | 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

English Registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFunds116>

Spanish Registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFundSpan116>

Welcome to 2026! Congress and the state Legislature are back and so are the weekly updates from the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD).



Congress has until January 30 to pass its budget bills or face the possibility of another government shutdown. The ACA subsidies expired, will they act to revive them after the fact? Meanwhile the state legislature faces shortfalls in special education, DVR, and more money is needed to made changes to FoodShare required by federal law. And changes at federal agencies and H.R. 1 implementation continue to impact states.

Family Caregiver Support

[Bryn Ceman](#), Caregiver Programs Specialist

Need to Know

Save the date: Next Family Caregiver Support Community call

Tuesday, January 27 | 10:00 a.m.

<https://gwaar.org/wisconsin-caregiver-support-community-monthly-calls>

The agenda is now posted for the January Caregiver Coordinator Statewide meeting: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008873>

Wisconsin's
FamilyCaregiver
Support Programs

Nice to Know

New Year, New Caregiver Focus: Trualta Lunch & Learn

Friday, January 16 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Start 2026 with practical tools you can use right away.

Join us for a FREE virtual Trualta Lunch & Learn on Friday, January 16, 2026 | 12:00–1:00 p.m. to explore Wisconsin's free online caregiver learning library. This opportunity is open to all, caregivers, non-caregivers, employers, employees, HR/Benefits/Wellness Manager, kinship, foster families, and more.


You'll learn how Trualta offers support for caregiver wellness, dementia care, fall prevention, balancing work and caregiving, and more. Open to EVERYONE in Wisconsin!



Caregiver Insights Across the States: Translating Data into Local Action free webinar

Tuesday, January 27 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Family caregivers are a vital part of our communities and our care systems. Understanding their evolving needs is essential for creating innovative, sustainable caregiver programs and policies.

 Newly released state-level caregiver profiles provide powerful insights into caregiving realities across the U.S.

Join this important webinar, presented by National Alliance for Caregiving and USAging, to explore key findings from these profiles and learn how this data is already shaping the work of Area Agencies on Aging and caregiver support networks nationwide.



✦ During this session, participants will:

- ✓ Gain key takeaways from state caregiver data
- ✓ Hear how one AAA is using this information to guide programs and services
- ✓ Learn from caregivers engaged in innovative social support models
- ✓ Leave with practical ideas to translate data into meaningful local action

If you're committed to building caregiver-inclusive, supportive communities, this is a can't-miss conversation. 📌 **Register here:** <https://bit.ly/4oIHgmS>

Reminder: Webinar Opportunity: Engaging Caregivers in the Community

Wednesday, January 21 | 1:00 -2:30 p.m.

Join Dr. Angela Tobin and Dr. Ali Caliendo for an empowering webinar focused on building authentic, trusting relationships with kinship caregivers and strengthening engagement through meaningful, trauma-informed approaches.



This session will explore strategies to **create welcoming spaces, reduce barriers to access, honor lived experience, and ensure caregivers' voices shape programs and services.**

This training is ideal for professionals working with kinship families, community organizations, aging and disability programs, and anyone committed to enhancing caregiver support.

 **Learn more and register here:**

<https://www.gksnetwork.org/events/engaging-caregivers-in-the-community/>

Reminder: Nutrition & Aging: Caregivers Play a Critical Role

By 2050, the global population of adults age 60+ is expected to reach 2.1 billion, and with aging comes increased risk for malnutrition. In fact, up to 50% of older adults may be at risk. Malnutrition can contribute to more frequent falls, hospital readmissions, increased healthcare costs, and reduced quality of life.

Caregivers can help by watching for:

- ◆ Recent weight loss or loose clothing
- ◆ Changes in appetite
- 💧 Reduced fluid intake
- 🏠 Difficulty shopping, cooking, or accessing food
- 🧠 Confusion, weakness, or mental health changes
- 🗣️ Social isolation
- 💰 Financial strain affecting food access

Support older adults by encouraging:


- 🍽️ Regular meals and healthy snacks
- 🍖 Protein-rich foods
- 💧 Hydration
- 👥 Social mealtimes
- 🛒 Help with grocery shopping or meal preparation

Caregivers truly make a difference in helping older adults stay healthy, nourished, and independent.

View the flyer: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008866>

NUTRITION AND AGING: MAXIMIZING THE CAREGIVER'S ROLE

Caregivers can promote good nutrition by addressing common nutrition concerns. This will help older adults meet their nutrition needs.

NUTRITION CONCERN	WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	ENCOURAGE OLDER ADULTS TO...
 CALORIES	CALORIES come from carbohydrates, protein, and fat and provide our bodies with the energy they need to function. Choosing to eat a wide variety of foods can help older adults meet their calorie needs and get key nutrients, including different vitamins and minerals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat at least 3 meals a day • Eat snacks throughout the day for extra calories • Add herbs and spices to foods to enhance interest in eating • Increase food variety by preparing meals and snacks with nutrient-rich foods (eg, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish, and lean meats)
 PROTEIN	PROTEIN helps our bodies maintain muscle mass and strength, which is crucial for older adults, especially during periods of stress or illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase protein in the diet by eating meats, eggs, low-fat dairy foods (milk, yogurt, and cheese), seeds, and nuts • Consider adding a high-protein oral nutrition supplement to meals and snacks
 FLUIDS	FLUIDS , such as water or electrolyte solutions, help to regulate body temperature, maintain fluid balance in cells, and absorb nutrients. Older adults are at an increased risk for dehydration due to physical changes. When older adults are dehydrated, it can negatively affect their mental status, cause dizziness, and increase risk of falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink fluids in the morning, before each meal, and an hour before bed • Keep a water bottle nearby to drink throughout the day, even if they don't feel thirsty • Discuss with their physician any medications they take since these could affect hydration status, and determine the need for an electrolyte solution to quickly replenish fluids and electrolytes

HELPFUL IDEAS FOR CAREGIVERS

 ASSIST WITH MEAL PLANNING & PREPARATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare meals together and store for later • Shop for groceries together 	 MAKE MEALS A SOCIAL EVENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy a meal at a favorite restaurant • Encourage participating in social programs with members of the community • Visit during mealtimes 	 CONSIDER FOOD COSTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find money-saving shopping approaches, such as visiting grocery store websites ahead of time to look for coupons • Find resources within the community to help reduce food costs
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Visit anhi.org or scan this QR code for a digital copy of this resource



Fiscal Resources and Data Management

Carrie Kroetz, Data Management and Technology Coordinator

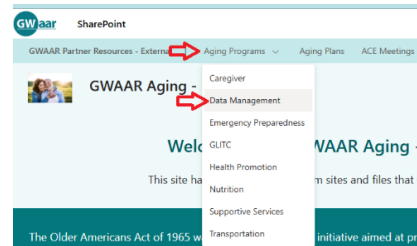
Need to Know

****Reminders****

All webinars are recorded and posted on the GWAAR Partners Resources site and accessed by registered users.

<https://gwaar.sharepoint.com/sites/PartnerResources> | Aging Programs | [Data Management](#)

<https://gwaar.sharepoint.com/sites/PartnerResources> | [Fiscal Resources](#)



****End of Federal Year Reporting****

We have completed and submitted our NAPIS Federal Report portion to the state. If there are further questions GWAAR may reach out to Aging Units for clarification.

GWAAR Fiscal and Data will be hosting a webinar, date/time TBD, to provide information regarding the GWAAR NAPIS process and to ask Aging Units for feedback regarding what more we could do during the year to help facilitate this annual project.

****Remaining Transfers****

GWAAR Fiscal has received the remaining transfer contract, and an amendment will be sent out to Aging Units shortly. The updated allocations will be included in the Final Claim form.

****2026 Draft Budget****

Due to upcoming changes taking effect in 2026 we have yet to post the 2026 Draft Budget. Once we have solidified the changes, we will update the form and inform Aging Directors and Fiscal staff of the posting. GWAAR Fiscal will also hold a webinar to inform Aging Unit staff of these changes and a review of instructions to complete the budget, waiver, and transfer requests. In the meantime, we have received the estimated allocations and have posted them in the Fiscal Resources library under Budget.

****2026 Claim Form****

GWAAR Fiscal will be updating the 2026 Claim Form with the 2026 allocations and changes to reporting requirements. We plan to have the form posted by early to mid-February. We will be hosting a webinar, date/time TBD, to review the updates and respond to questions.

****Upcoming Training****

Regional Trainings – GWAAR staff is working on scheduling Fiscal and Data Spring trainings again this year – once arrangements are finalized we will send out the registration information.

PeerPlace New Year's Training Series: These trainings will be held by individual programs and review how to enter participants and service data, how to run error reports to review basic (NAPIS) information and determined data entry inconsistencies, discuss errors found during the current NAPIS report, and address 1st FFY quarter (Oct-Dec) corrections.

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Health Promotion - Evidence-Based and Non-Evidence-Based (IIID & IIIB) Peer Place Training

Thursday, January 22 | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Registration: <https://bit.ly/45TciSv>

Supportive and In-Home Services (IIIB) PeerPlace Training

Thursday, January 29 | 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Registration: <https://bit.ly/456otv8>

Nutrition Services (IIIC) PeerPlace Training:

Tuesday, February 3 | 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Registration: <https://bit.ly/4jD5aPT>

Caregiver Services (IIIE & AFCSP) PeerPlace Training

Thursday, February 5 | 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

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

Health Promotion

[Angie Sullivan](#), Health Promotion Program Specialist

Need to Know

Reminder: Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar

Tuesday, February 10 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

(Optional 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. Networking and Sharing)

Virtual – TEAMS: <https://bit.ly/4siQkSw>

Plan to attend the first Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar of 2026. The agenda includes a 2025 Program Summary of Health Promotion Programs across the State, important updates from GWAAR and the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging as well as highlighting evidence-based Diabetes education programs.

There will be an optional time at the end of the webinar for counties to informally discuss successes, challenges, etc. This portion of the webinar will not be recorded.



Nice to Know

Just Added! Stepping On **New** Facilitator Refresher Training

Thursday, March 12 | 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Cost: \$100

The Stepping On Facilitator Refresher Training is now available through the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) to support your continued success and ability to serve older adults in your communities.



Stepping On facilitators must co-facilitate a workshop every 12 months to remain certified. This training allows Stepping On facilitators whose certification has lapsed to become re-certified without going through the full 3-day training. To qualify to attend a refresher training, the facilitator must have co-facilitated a workshop in the last 24 months.

The training will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Cost: \$100

Refresher Training Application: <https://wiha.wufoo.com/forms/witnckx02mijj5/>

Nutrition

[Kristi Cooley](#), Nutrition Program Specialist

[Jean Lynch](#), Program Specialist Manager

[Pam VanKampen](#), Nutrition Program & Senior Center Specialist

Need to Know

2026 meeting dates posted on GWAAR SharePoint

We'll include these updates in future newsletters, but if you want to get your calendar updated right away, you can find them on SharePoint.

News link for registered SharePoint users: <https://bit.ly/4qJDRWY>



Nice to Know

Reminder: Oliver Update: Important Tray & Film Pricing News for 2026

Oliver announced a tray and film price increase averaging 3.7%, effective February 1, 2026, due to continued increases in labor, materials, packaging, and transportation costs. The company shared that investments made in 2025 improved production capacity, product availability, customer support, and on-time delivery performance, and that the adjustment is needed to maintain reliable products and service moving forward.

Oliver's Account Managers are available to answer questions and help programs find the best product mix for their meal service needs. If you have any questions please contact Marisol Olvera molvera@oliverquality.com

Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol

[Ingrid A. Kundinger](#), Senior Medicare Patrol Program Director

Nice to Know

Reminder: January's Scam Spotlight

With the new year comes old scams, specifically when it comes to the telephone.

This month's Scam Spotlight is focused on the scams that happen via telephone, reminding people that, as the title says, "Not every ring is a friend!"

<https://www.smpwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/01-January-2026.pdf>

Wisconsin SMP
January 2026
SCAM SPOTLIGHT

Not Every Ring Is a Friend!

Think back to a time when the telephone was a family's main connection to the outside world. Back then, having a phone meant staying connected to family and having help in an emergency.

Today, that has changed. It is estimated that about 95 percent of the calls are unwanted — sales pitches, donation requests, or scams. What was once a lifeline has become a tool for marketers and criminals. Scammers often target seniors because they want access to personal information, money, or Medicare benefits.

So what can you do? First, let your answering machine or voicemail screen your calls. **ONLY** answer when you recognize the caller. It also helps to plan ahead and prepare a simple response.

Here are a few suggestions:

- If the caller claims to represent a charity, ask them to send information in writing, and state that you do not donate over the phone.
- If someone is selling something, request written information. If they say it's a limited-time offer, explain that you don't make decisions during phone calls.
- Ask for the caller's name, company name, and a callback number, and tell them you will verify the offer before responding.

Most importantly, watch for these red flags:

- Requests for credit card or bank information
- Requests for personal information such as Medicare or Social Security numbers
- Pressure to act immediately
- Calls where the caller claims to know information about you but asks you to confirm it

If you hear any of these warning signs, hang up immediately.

Report any suspected fraud or suspicious activity to the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol. Call 888-818-7611 to report fraudulent activity.

For more information, visit www.smpwi.org.

SMP
Senior Medicare Patrol
Preserving Medicare Pledges

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