Invest in Aging and Disability Resource Centers

STATE ISSUE BRIEF

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Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are a cornerstone of Wisconsin's support system for older adults, adults living with a disability, and their caregivers.

Wisconsin's statewide network of ADRCs provide information about critical, cost-saving services and programs related to aging or living with a disability. The state's 57 ADRCs provide service to all 72 counties and 11 federally recognized tribal nations. They serve individuals, family members, friends and professionals working with related issues.

WAAN's position:
Increase funding for ADRCs by $19.9 million/year to address increasing costs and community needs **and by $1.7 million/year for shared services** in the 2027-2029 biennial state budget.

A robust and well-funded ADRC network will help Wisconsin residents navigate their unique challenges with confidence and dignity.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, older adults are fastest growing demographic of our state's population and Wisconsinites aged 60 and older make up over 25% of the population of Wisconsin. As these numbers increase, the contributions of ADRCs to their communities will positively affect the quality of life for even more community members.

Increasing funding to ADRCs will deliver substantial benefits to constituents and taxpayers

Current funding shortfalls lead to inconsistent service delivery and *limit* the ability of some ADRCs to provide *essential*, *contractually required* services.

An **investment of $19.9 million/year** will enable every ADRC to continue providing high-quality unbiased information and offer reliable and comprehensive support, allowing individuals to age in place, delay entry into residential long-term care and improve their overall quality of life. **Additional shared services funding of $1.7 million/year is needed** to support attorneys for the Disability and Elder Benefit Specialist programs ,PeerPlace reporting system, health data system, toll-free ADRC statewide number, and training.

Investing in ADRCs yields a remarkable return on investment. In 2025, **every dollar invested in providing ADRC services to people in the community produces an estimated net savings of $1.87 in hospital costs.** [1]

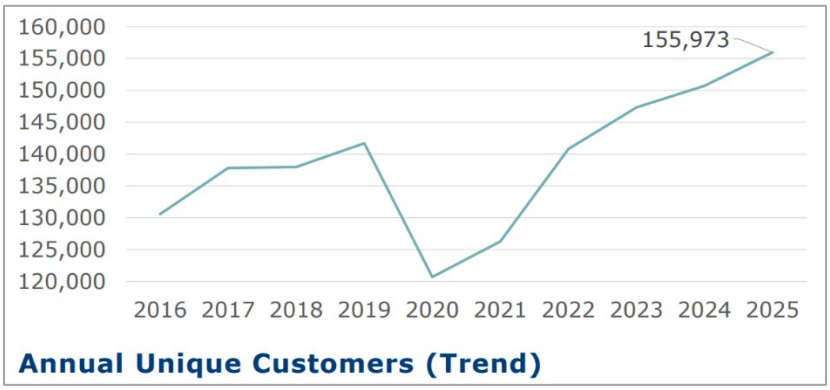
Wisconsin's ADRCs, aging units, aging services providers, and Tribal partner programs served 264,089 people in 2025. **Half of those individuals received services from more than one program area**.

The role of ADRCs in health care outcomes:
According to **2025 statistics**, ADRCs prevented:
- More than 9,500 hospital 30-day readmissions, and
- Nearly 16,000 emergency department visits.

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Impact of ADRCs

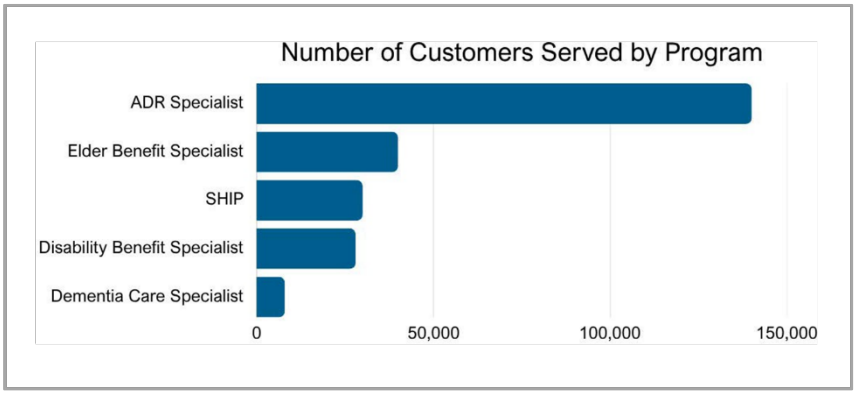
In 2025, ADRCs served nearly **156,000 unique customers**.[2] Despite this significant reach, current funding levels are inadequate to sustain operations and meet the rising demand for services.



Existing funding does not adequately account for the changing demographics, changing policy landscape, and increasing operational costs faced by ADRCs.

Over the past 14 years, baseline funding for ADRC services increased twice, $5.1 million in the 2023-2025 biennial budget and another $2 million in the 2025-2027 budget. While this increase provided some relief, it continues to fall short of what is needed to meet a growing need, rising costs, and increasing complex policies impacting older adults, people living with disabilities, and family caregivers.

Providing the funding needed to support ADRCs is an investment that benefits all of Wisconsin, one community member at a time. Together, we can strengthen our commitment to the well-being of all Wisconsin citizens.



-Reference #3

To learn more about ADRCs, go to https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/index.htm.

To view a summary report on The Impact of the ADRC and Tribal Programs in Wisconsin, see https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p00251.pdf.

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

Sources: *(continued on page 3)*

Core member organizations

Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW) • Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter Board on Aging and Long Term Care (BOALTC) • InControl Wisconsin
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 gwaar.org/waan.

ADRC Investment Sources:

1. Return on Investment calculation is based on number of prevented 30-day hospital readmissions and emergency department visits per ADRC customers served using the Wisconsin DHS and MetaStar study and updated cost estimates from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, https://www.ahrq.gov/ .
2. 2025 ADRC statewide Encounter program data.
3. 2025 ADRC statewide PeerPlace program data.