

Advocacy Update

11-15-24

State

2025-2026 State Legislature

Election Results

Preliminary results from the General Election indicate in the 2025-2026 state legislature, Republicans will hold 55% of the seats in the Senate and Assembly and Democrats will hold 45% of the seats in each house.

There will be four new faces in the state Senate and an additional four Senators will be joining as former Assembly Representatives or will be serving a new district because of redistricting. In the Assembly, there will be 29 new Assembly Representatives and 33 Representatives who will be serving a new district, came from the Senate, or are former state legislators.

Senate & Assembly Leadership - as of 11-12-24

Senate Republican Leadership

- Senate Majority Leader – Devin LeMahieu
- **Senate President – Mary Felzkowski**
- Senate Assistance Majority Leader – Dan Feyen
- Senate President Pro Tempore – Patrick Testin
- Senate Republican Caucus Chair – Van Wanggaard
- **Senate Republican Caucus Vice-Chair Rachel Cabral-Guevara**

Little change in Senate Republican leadership next year. The two changes include the Senate President is currently Sen. Kapenga and will be Sen. Felzkowski next session and the Senate Republican Caucus Vice-Chair is currently Sen. Ballweg (who was not re-elected) and will be Sen. Cabral-Guevara next session.

Senate Democrat Leadership

- Minority Leader – Dianne Hesselbein
- Assistant Minority Leader – Jeff Smith
- Caucus Chair – Mark Spreitzer
- Caucus Vice-Chair – Dora Drake

There are two changes in Senate Democrat leadership next year. Sen. Spreitzer who had been the minority caucus Vice-Chair will become the Minority cause Chair (replacing Sen. Chris Larson) and Dora Drake was elected to serve as the new caucus Vice-Chair.

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

- Speaker – Robin Vos
- Majority Leader – Tyler August
- **Assistant Majority Leader – Scott Krug**
- Speaker Pro Tempore – Kevin Peterson
- Caucus Chair – Rob Summerfield
- Caucus Vice-Chair – Cindy Duchow
- Caucus Sgt-at-Arms – Treig Pronschinske
- Caucus Secretary – Nancy VanderMeer

The only change in Republican leadership from the 2023-2024 session is the Assistant Majority Leader. Rep. Plumer who was in that position, announced his retirement this past spring and Rep. Krug was elected to serve in that position for 2025-2026.

ASSEMBLY DEMOCRAT LEADERSHIP

Assembly Democrats are expected to meet to elect leadership on Tuesday, November 19, 2024.

Assembly Committees

Assembly Speaker, Robin Vos, indicated a list of committees for the 2025-2026 session will be completed before Thanksgiving. He also stated his plan to name the Assembly Republican members of the Joint Finance after the Thanksgiving holiday.

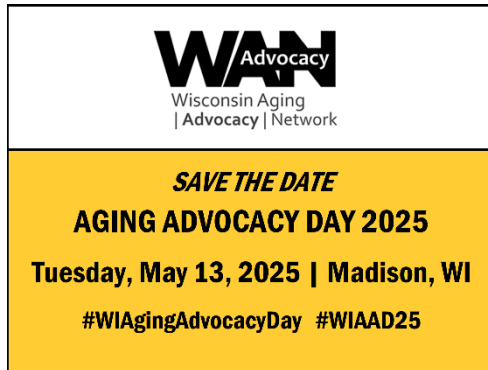
State Budget 2025-2027

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) has identified 10 priorities in need of funding in the 2025-2027 state budget. The list of priorities includes funding for: ADRCs, additional positions at the Board on Aging and Long Term Care, strategies addressing the direct care workforce shortage, the Elder Benefit Specialist program, elder justice programs, Guardianship Support Center, healthy aging grants (fall prevention), housing supports, home-delivered meals, and transportation.

To be more effective in our advocacy, we recognize the need to prioritize our funding requests. WAAN members have been asked to rank the priorities from their highest to lowest priority based upon the following criteria for each request:

1. How significant is the **impact** on people's lives if this issue can be addressed?
2. How **central** is the issue to other needs? Will resolving this issue help resolve other issues too?
3. How **feasible** is it that we can meaningfully contribute to addressing this issue? Is it winnable? In the current environment?

Aging Advocacy Day 2025 – Save the Date



Federal

119th Congress (2025-2026)

Election Results

November's General Election resulted in some significant changes at the federal level. On Jan. 20, 2025, former President Trump will become the 47th President of the United States. The makeup of the 119th Congress also differs from the current Congress, as the Senate Majority has changed from Democrat to Republican. The House Majority will remain Republican. The same political party now controls the executive branch of the federal government, as well as both chambers of Congress (this is referred to as a governing trifecta).

One new member will join Wisconsin's Congressional delegation for the remainder of this year and next session, Rep. Tony Weid was elected to represent Wisconsin's 8th Congressional District (replacing Rep. Gallagher who resigned earlier this year).

Older Americans Act (OAA) – Appropriations & Reauthorization

Older Americans Act (OAA) – FFY 2025 Budget Update

In late September, Congress passed a **Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government funded until Dec. 20, 2024**. On Fri, Sept. 28, President Biden signed the CR, which keeps federal agencies and programs funded at fiscal year (FY) 2024 levels, into law.

As a refresher, the House and Senate released their FY 2025 proposed bills over the summer with the House bill including increases to OAA Title III B, III E and Title VI but with cuts to other key aging programs (OAA Title III C1 and C2 Nutrition Services programs, Adult Protective Services and the OAA's Title V, the Senior Community Service Employment Program). The Senate bill rejected House-proposed cuts and included level-funding for OAA programs. See USAging's [appropriations chart](#) for specific details.

Passage of the CR buys Congress more time to negotiate FY 2025 appropriations. **Our goal remains to keep the House increases to OAA Title III B, III E and Title VI, with the Senate's better recommendations for the other priorities in the final bill.**

The expiration of pandemic funding, cuts in funding to the OAA Nutrition Program in Federal Fiscal Year 2024, elevated gas and food prices, and shortages of volunteers, have placed significant financial strain on the national network of senior nutrition programs. **Recently, 65 national organizations wrote to House and Senate leaders regarding the urgent need for emergency supplemental funding for senior nutrition programs. They requested Congressional leaders prioritize \$200 million in emergency supplemental funding for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program to address mounting wait lists for Meals on Wheels services.** The additional funding would enable senior nutrition programs to provide nearly 75 million additional meals and serve approximately 650,000 more older adults in need. Stay tuned, as our national partners will be contacting us in the future to join their advocacy efforts.

OAA Reauthorization

In July, the Senate HELP Committee passed the OAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 4776). Our national partner (USAgings) endorsed the bill which incorporated many of their priorities in full or in part. **If this OAA Reauthorization legislation** is funded, it would include:

- **Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Independence:** Freedom from state approval around business or health care contracts if *no* OAA funding is used (limited disclosure only) and updated, clarifying language about when OAA funding *is* leveraged.
- **Title III D Flexibility:** Funding could be used for evidence-informed programs, as well as evidence-based programs.
- **Nutrition Flexibility:** Grab-and-go meals option is codified in the law, with up to 25 percent of C1 available if the state approves, and the ability to distribute these meals in any community setting.
- **Social Isolation:** Prioritize national training and technical assistance to the Aging Network on social engagement programming and innovations.
- **Funding Recommendations:** Increase authorization levels by nearly 20 percent over the five-year period.

ACTION NEEDED:

Contact your U.S. Representative to emphasize the critical importance of reauthorizing the OAA to support older adults and family caregivers in your community.

To find out who your Congressional Representative is, put your ZIP code in the white box on this webpage:
<https://www.house.gov/>

The House has not yet shared OAA Reauthorization legislation and must be encouraged to do so quickly, as the last reauthorization of the OAA Act officially expired on Sept. 30, 2024.