

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) Action Alert – State Budget Campaign Week Three

The state legislature's Joint Finance Committee has only one public hearing remaining on the 2023-2025 state budget.

The remaining public hearing is:

- **Wednesday, April 26, 2023** - Lakeland Union High School 9573 State Highway 70, Minocqua

See the Joint Finance Committee 2023-2025 Biennial Budget [Public Comment Website](#) for additional information.

With so much at stake for older adults and caregivers, we must use every opportunity available to provide input on the 2023-2025 state budget. This is week three of the **Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's (WAAN) four-week campaign to educate members of the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) about pressing issues impacting the lives of older Wisconsinites. The campaign includes strategies for connecting with members of the JFC, your own state Senator and Assembly Representative, as well as opportunities to educate the public and media about WAAN's priority issues.**

WAAN has created a **theme for each week in April to help coordinate our messages.** The themes each week cover issues of importance to older adults and caregivers.

Themes for the remaining two weeks are below:

- **April 17th – Independence & Health:** Healthy Aging Grants/Housing
- **April 24th – *Caregiving:** Family Caregivers/Long-term Care Workforce

(***Get your comments submitted early the final week of the campaign,** as the online portal and email address could close after the final hearing on April 26th.)

Action needed this week:

Action Step 1 – Submit budget comments related to need investments in Healthy Aging Grants or Housing Support (see talking point resources below) to the Joint Finance Committee using their online portal: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments (If you prefer, your comments may also be submitted to the Joint Finance Committee using the following email address: budgetcomments@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Action Step 2 – Send emails to your own state elected officials. Send one email to your state Assembly Representative and another to your state Senator. To find out who your state legislators are (and to find their contact information) go [here](#) and enter your home address in the box under “Who are my Legislators?” **Let your legislators know how these issues impact you personally or those you serve. Be sure you include your address, so they know you are a constituent or are serving constituents in their district.**

Action Step 3 – Share this message with board members, program participants, volunteers, and community members and partners and ask them to take action too!

Optional Action Steps

Share your story (see [Five Steps for Creating Powerful Personal Testimony](#)). **Healthy Aging Grants** -

Have you, a family member, or someone you serve had a recent fall? What were the costs financially and to your independence? Have you recently attended, taught, or sponsored a falls prevention class (Stepping On)? How are these services improving lives in your community? How are falls impacting you and/or your community – EMS calls, emergency room visits? Have you or someone you know participated in a class to learn about managing chronic conditions or improving physical activity? How would your community benefit from resources used to help strengthen and expand training and support to grow the number of evidence-based prevention classes, facilitators, and participants? How would resources, funding and support for local falls prevention efforts, and assistance to build falls prevention coalitions help your community? **For additional talking points, see the attached “Talking Points for Healthy Aging Grants” document.** **Housing** – What has been your experience trying to find (or help someone else find) accessible and affordable housing in your community? What percentage of your income are you (or those you serve) paying for housing? Are you or someone you know struggling to pay home property taxes or to pay for home repairs or home modifications? Is homelessness a concern in your community?

See WAAN’s [Healthy Aging Grants Issue Brief](#) or [Housing Issue Brief](#) for more information on the network’s budget asks and talking points.

In addition to sharing your personal story in your written comments to JFC consider one or more of these additional actions:

- A. Write a letter to the editor!** Using your story and/or talking points on either of the issues (see below) write a short letter to the editor (usually around 200-250 words) to your local daily or weekly paper.
- B. Prepare articles for your agency newsletter related to these budget topics** (and/or submit an article to your local newspaper regarding funding needs for Healthy Aging Grants or housing supports.
- C. Share a budget message on your social media sites and tag your state Senator and Assembly Representative.** Find **social media links for state legislators** [here](#) (Senators see pg. 8 and Assembly Representatives see pgs. 9 & 10).
- D. Attend an in-district listening session with your legislator(s).** Many legislators are holding listening sessions in their districts. Sign up to receive your legislator’s electronic newsletters and watch for opportunities for you to connect with your legislators.
- E. Invite your legislators for a site visit or to attend an agency event or board meeting.** This is a great way to help your legislators hear about and see the great work you are doing.

Your voice matters! The more of us that participate in the hearings and the weekly campaign activities, the more legislators will hear what issues are important to aging advocates and older adults.

Thank you.