

ACTION ALERT: 2025-27 State Budget

Week Two

4-14-25

☎ 608-228-7253

🌐 www.gwaar.org/waan

✉ janet.zander@gwaar.org

📱 @WAAN.ACTION

The state legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) has two remaining public hearings on the 2025-2027 State Budget. The remaining public hearing schedule is:

- April 28 - Hayward High School Auditorium - 10320 Greenwood Lane Hayward, WI 54843; 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- April 29 – Northcentral Technical College - Center for Health Sciences 1000 West Campus Drive Wausau, WI 54401 Wausau, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

See [Tips for Testifying Before JFC at State Budget Hearings](#). See the Joint Finance Committee 2025-27 Biennial Budget [Public Comment Website](#) for additional information, including the link to submit written budget testimony via the JFC's online portal.

With so much at stake for older adults, people living with disabilities, and caregivers in this budget, we must use every opportunity available to provide input on the 2025-27 state budget. **This is week two of the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's (WAAN) four-week state budget campaign. The campaign includes strategies for connecting with JFC members, your own state Senator and Assembly Representative, as well as opportunities to educate the public and media about WAAN's budget priority issues and their impact on your life and/or the lives of those you care for and about.**

Your stories are important and impactful!

To help coordinate our messages, WAAN created a **theme for each week of the campaign**. The themes each week cover issues of importance to older people and family caregivers.

Themes for the remaining three weeks are:

- April 14th – **Support and Protection**: This week will focus on funding for the Board on Aging and Long Term Care and Elder Abuse Prevention
- April 21st – **Health and Independence**: This week will focus on funding for Healthy Aging Grants and the Direct Care Workforce
- April 28th **Knowledge is Power**: This week our focus will be on funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), the Elder Benefit Specialist Program, and the Wisconsin Guardianship Support Center

Week Two (4/14 – 4/18/25) - Bullet/Talking Points for this week's "Support and Protection" theme - Board on Aging and Long Term Care (BOALTC)

- Additional Long Term Care (LTC) ombudsmen and infrastructure staff are needed to help the program address the health, safety, welfare and rights issues that older adults face.
- Despite steady and ongoing demographic growth in the numbers of persons and types of settings served, the last significant increase in Ombudsman resources was in 2016; leaving BOALTC with insufficient capacity to continue to meet the needs of those that it is mandated to serve.

- Wisconsin has only 1 Regional Ombudsman for every 6,600 constituents they are mandated to serve. This is only one-third of the national minimum staffing ratio for Ombudsmen.

Budget ask: Allocating appropriate resources to BOALTC ensures Wisconsinites will have the necessary support they need to navigate the challenges of the ever-changing long-term care and insurance systems.

For more information, see WAAN's [BOALTC Issue Brief](#)

Elder Abuse & Fraud Prevention

- As the population of older adults in Wisconsin increases, so too does the prevalence of elder abuse, with reports more than tripling between 2001 and 2023.
- Despite tremendous progress in recent years, resources to support victims, enhance safety, and hold offenders accountable have not kept pace with the growing aging population. The lack of invested resources in this area leaves many criminal justice partners unprepared to identify and address the issue.
- A recent needs-based assessment reveals a gap between current capabilities and desired performance levels, necessitating continued education and training to bridge the gap.

Budget ask: Increase Grants for protection of elders' funding by \$350,000 annually to continue funding existing programs (Wis. Stat. 165.937).

For more information, see WAAN's [Elder Abuse & Fraud Prevention Issue Brief](#)

Actions needed this week:

Action Step 1 – Submit online comments to Joint Finance Committee (JFC) members related to one or both of the issues of the week (see talking points and issue brief links above. Include how these issues or services impact your life or the life of someone you care about. Use JFC's 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: budget.comments@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 to <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/> and enter your home address at the top of the page. 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. Every member of the Assembly and Senate will eventually vote on the budget. In addition, they can bring your concerns to members of the JFC since they all have a "budget buddy" to make sure they each have a say in the budget.

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

Core member organizations

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

Optional Action Steps

Share your story (see [Five Steps for Creating Powerful Personal Testimony](#)). How do the programs or services in this week's theme or the absence of these services and programs affect your life or the life of a family member, friend, or someone you serve. **In addition to sharing your personal story in your written comments to JFC and your own state legislators, consider one or more of these additional actions:**

- A. Write a letter to the editor!** Using your story and/or talking points on this week's issues (see above) write a short letter to the editor 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 this week's issues).
- C. Attend an in-district listening session with your legislator(s).** Many legislators are holding listening sessions in their districts. Sign up for your legislators' electronic newsletters and watch for opportunities for you to connect with them.
- D. 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 about the issues important to aging advocates and older adults.

All WAAN issue briefs are available at: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008488>.

The 2025-27 State Budget Action Alert for Week One is available at:

<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008518>

Core member organizations

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