

July/August 2016

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network Releases State Issue Briefs

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) recently released a series of state issue briefs outlining their positions on priority public policy issues impacting the health and well-being of older adults.

WAAN's mission is to work with and for Wisconsin's older adults to shape public policy that improves their quality of life. WAAN educates supporters and opponents, mobilizes allies on priority issues, and advocates positions visibly and effectively.

WAAN is organized to:

- Expand the influence of each affiliate organization through collective advocacy.
- Engage members and their constituencies in developing priority issues.
- Utilize member experience, knowledge, and relationships in advocacy strategies and campaigns on priority issues.
- Increase organizational capacity for grassroots citizen advocacy.
- Help build a society that values and supports people as they age.

You can find the WAAN issue briefs at: <http://gwaar.org/waan>

Ageing Advocacy Day 2017!

SAVE THE DATE - Wed., May 17, 2017, we will gather for the WAAN second annual Ageing Advocacy Day. Older Americans Month (May) is the perfect time for aging advocates from across the state to come together to learn, get energized and share the aging network's policy priorities with their legislators.

Make plans to join us at Capitol Lakes in Madison and then march with us to the State Capitol for legislative visits.



State Broadband Office Conducting High Speed Internet Access Demand Survey

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission's State Broadband Office recently announced the release of its High Speed Internet Access Demand Survey. The survey gives residents and businesses an opportunity to express their need for improved internet access or service.

The goal of the survey is to help state planners and policy makers better understand the need for improved internet access in the state.

The internet plays an increasingly important role in connecting older Americans to news, information and resources, government services and benefits and opportunities for social support. High speed internet can also help older adults improve their quality of life, reduce their medical care costs and live independently.

While the majority of older adults use the internet, the senior and rural populations still lag slightly behind other populations in access to broadband services at home.

Let the Public Service Commission know how you feel about your internet connection and encourage others to do the same.

To complete the survey, go to: <http://psc.wi.gov/broadbandsurvey.htm> .

For those unable to access the survey online, the survey can be completed by calling this toll-free number: (877) 360-2973.

Voting: What You Need to Know

Late last month, a federal judge issued a series of voting changes that affect the upcoming Nov. 8 presidential election. U.S. District Judge Peterson ruled laws that limited in-person absentee voting to one location, restricted early voting hours and eliminated weekend voting are unconstitutional. In addition, he overturned laws that increased the residency requirement for voters from 10 days to 28 days and prohibited the distribution of absentee ballots via fax or email. Judge Peterson's changes also included a ruling allowing citizens who have trouble obtaining an acceptable photo ID for voting to be able to vote by affidavit. At this time, the affidavit option will not be available to voters in November, as the Seventh Circuit has since stayed a partial injunction on the Wisconsin voter ID law.

Given all of the recent voting changes, GWAAR has put together a list of resources to help engage, educate, register, and mobilize voters. These resources help to provide answers to questions such as:

- ✓ Where can I vote?
- ✓ How do I register?
- ✓ What's on my ballot?
- ✓ Who are the candidates?
- ✓ What can I do to help engage more low-income and minority voters?
- ✓ What voter related activities are appropriate for me or my agency to engage in?

and more!!!

The resource list is available on GWAAR's website homepage at : www.gwaar.org .

Let's make sure everyone who wants to vote can vote!



Federal FY 2017 Aging Services Funding Update

In July, the House Appropriations Committee approved their FY 2017 spending plan to fund the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education and related agencies (Labor-HHS). This bill sets discretionary spending levels for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs. Many aging programs saw slight

funding increases in the House Appropriations Committee bill. Though long overdue, the modest funding increases are much appreciated in contrast to the funding bill passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee in June.

The House Labor-HHS bill rejects the Senate proposed elimination of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and fully funds SHIPs at the FY 2016 level. The House bill also calls for moderate increases in funding for OAA Title VI Native American Nutrition and Supportive Services (versus the cuts proposed in the Senate bill), Title III-B Supportive Services and Title III-C Congregate & Home-Delivered Meals. The bill includes small funding increases for the Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Program and Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman program. The Senior Corps and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) programs were level funded at FY 2016 levels.

See revised funding charts for further detail:

- *NCOA Aging Program Funding Table*
<https://www.ncoa.org/resources/federal-budget-fy17-aging-program-funding-table/>
- *n4a Appropriations Chart*
<http://www.n4a.org/Files/House%20Labor%20HHS%207%2012%2016.pdf>

Congress is on recess until Sept. 6. During this time Senators and Representatives are working (and campaigning) in their districts. Congress will be back in session for a few brief weeks in Sept. and will again recess from early Oct. to mid-Nov. Our national partners anticipate a federal spending plan will not pass before the new federal fiscal year begins on Oct. 1. Congress is expected to pass a short-term continuing resolution (CR) which will likely lock in funding at FY 2016 levels until final spending levels are set (probably after the election).

While your Representative and Senators Baldwin and Johnson are back in Wisconsin, educate them about these important aging services programs, the older adults who rely on them and the funding needed to address increased demand.