

**WAYNE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF AGING & YOUTH**

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Written Testimony for
2023 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing
February 13, 2023
Human Services

Respectfully Submitted by Amy Haskins, Director

Senator Krueger, Assemblywoman Weinstein, and other Honorable Committee Members:

I am writing to you as an advocate for seniors in my community regarding the state budget year. I am the director of the Area Agency on Aging for Wayne County. Our state association submitted budget recommendations to the governor's office, which I have enclosed. These "asks" are all based on real numbers statewide and not just some figures that are made up. It was very disappointing that NONE of this is reflected in the initial budget released by the Governor's office.

Just a few highlights that particularly impact Wayne County seniors and my staff that try their best to serve them:

- Home Delivered Meals - In 2022 we served 42,000 meals to 270 people in Wayne County. Our base allocation for this service for our current state budget year is only \$1776 higher than it was pre-COVID. Our meal cost during that time has almost doubled from \$5.19 to our current rate of \$9.37 (a reduction of 22,500 meals). This reflects the increases in staffing costs, fuel costs, mileage reimbursement to volunteers, and of course, the ever-increasing cost of food. We have only been able to serve as many people as we did last year because of the Federal Stimulus money that was awarded during the height of the COVID pandemic. We are almost through those funds and had to start a wait list so that we would be able to stay on budget in 2023. In just three short months, we are up to 30 frail, elderly Wayne County seniors waiting for meals that are designed to support them in living independently at home.
- Aide Service - In 2019 we began employing our own personal care aides to serve our senior clients within our case management/aide service programs. We did also subcontract for this service, but were facing increasing waitlists as the contractors had an increasingly difficult time with staffing even when we had funds to pay for the service. The rates we paid for care pre-COVID hovered just below \$25/hour. Last year, we had to do contract amendments increasing rates because the contractors were now required to pay the in-home workers at least \$2 more than minimum wage (still grossly underpaid in my opinion). We were given no additional money in the budget for this increase and instead were directed to use the COLA increase that we received to cover this increase. Now the rate is hovering around \$40 per hour and one of our contractors, due to staffing, can no longer contract with us so we will soon have 10 seniors who have been receiving regular in-home services, some for years, joining the 31 other seniors we have waiting on a list for their aide service to start. This year's COLA increase is less than half of last years.
- Our staff, like many human service organizations worked diligently throughout the pandemic to serve our senior population. While the county sent the workforce home for the first couple months, my staff turned their homes into offices, had their office phones transferred to their cell phones, made calls, did insurance and benefits counseling, checked in on people, and even made deliveries to seniors who were in desperate situations. Our personal care aides continued to go out throughout the entire pandemic to provide care to residents in their homes. The state legislation for the Homecare Worker Bonus specifically authorized NYSOFA funded programs to be eligible, but NONE of my

staff were eligible or received a single cent (including my personal care/home health aides - one of whom transferred to us from the county nursing home where her former coworkers ALL got bonuses). The position titles that were used to authorize payments were not the same position titles that NYSOFA uses.

- The workforce difficulties that have plagued the homecare industry for years have seeped their way into almost all the other community services that our older adults use. Our staff is increasingly frustrated by, not just our waiting lists, but waiting lists and general unavailability of community based services that our seniors and their caregivers can access. This takes a huge toll on my staff who day in and day out take calls from seniors and loved ones in dire need and then have nothing to offer them to meet those needs. Our seniors deserve better and cannot wait years for a Master Plan on Aging to make recommendations that will likely include providing adequate funding for services.

Perhaps some of these omissions were due to a lack of understanding of our population. We serve seniors who make just over the threshold for Medicaid or otherwise do not qualify for Medicaid, but need long term care services they cannot afford on their own. The budget pays a lot of attention to Medicaid recipients, but not all seniors have Medicaid to pay for those long-term care services. Most seniors do have Medicare, but Medicare does not pay for long term care services. Medicaid no longer covers all of the services they once did, making even the lowest income seniors ineligible for some services through their insurance. At a time where inflation is increasing and workers' wages are increasing, both much faster than seniors' "fixed-income" social security checks, we cannot ignore the reality that many of our seniors are facing homelessness, decisions between eating or heating or medical care, and now an inability to access needed long term care services.

The services we provide to seniors not only enable them to live at home safer and longer, but they delay these individuals need for Medicaid to cover the cost of needed services, saving millions of dollars and keeping hundreds (in Wayne County) of people out of more costly nursing homes. I am enclosing an analysis I did in 2019 of the clients we ACTUALLY served with the services we ACTUALLY provided and compared that to the cost that would have been incurred if those people did not have our services and had to go into a nursing home. This is based on real people and real numbers.

My final enclosure with this letter is a side by side of this year's budget and last year's budget for our state office so you can easily see where any increases or decreases have occurred based on the initial iteration of the Governor's budget.

I do not envy the difficult budget decisions that you have to make this year. I hope that New York will continue its commitment to being "Age-Friendly" and support the services that are so vitally important to seniors in my county and across the state. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,



Amy Haskins, Director



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2023-24 Executive Budget Request

New York's Aging Network saw a 75% increase in service demand during the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to this day with waiting lists for services continuing to grow. This network prevents older adults from going onto Medicaid with programs like home delivered meals, grocery delivery, transportation, technology connections, caregiver respite, and other vital services.

We are participating and appreciate the efforts surrounding the Master Plan on Aging, but there are actions that can be taken now that will provide immediate help to older adults and service delivery for the network to ensure older adults are not forced to go on to Medicaid.

The Association on Aging surveyed all 59 Area Agencies on Aging who report the following waiting lists which reflect the CSE and Home Care funding requests below:

Case Management/Assessment	7,713
Home Delivered Meals	892
Personal Care Level 1	1,568
Personal Care Level 2	2,007
Transportation	213
Home Repair/Modification	355
Respite/SADS	262
Legal Services	214

We respectfully request Governor Hochul continue the 2022-23 Executive Budget investment in the SOFA budget and include funding in the 2023-24 Executive Budget for the following:

In Order to Maintain Current Services

- \$7.05 million to address the mandated rate increase for home care workers. Funding was provided to MLTC plans for Medicaid providers and the aging services providers deserve the same revenue increase.
- \$29.1 for nutrition and Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) simply to absorb inflation and increased costs of food, gas, and other commodities. This calculation takes our existing funding and applies an adjustment for current inflation. This funding is for existing individuals on our service.
- \$375,000 to Lifespan of Greater Rochester Elder Abuse funding to continue programing

To Address Unmet Needs

- \$9.5 million for Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) individuals that are waiting for services other than home care. These individuals are waiting for home delivered meals, transportation, legal services, case management, home modifications, and respite.
- \$30 million for non-Medicaid personal care services*. This funding would allow the network to increase home care hours to mirror Medicaid covered authorizations, and provide the mandated rate increase for direct care workers.

Association on Aging in New York

- \$15 million investment into the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
- \$2.5 million investment into the NORC program
- Fully fund Fair Pay for Home Care, S5374 (May) / A6329 (Gottfried) seeks to “establish a base wage for home care workers at 150% of the regional minimum wage” to create jobs for New Yorkers, support older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers, and rebuild our economy by paying home care workers a just wage. Without a mandate and funding from the government, the wage compression will continue to be exacerbated, straining the existing home care system.

*The home care/personal care \$2 per increase for 2022-23 is being addressed by utilizing the COLA. However, counties are being told that in addition to the \$2, they must also cover the fringe benefits which had not been contemplated. For example, in Columbia County the hourly wage the county is being asked to cover is \$2.68. In addition, home care agencies will not take low or high acuity non-Medicaid home care cases leaving those older adults without a home care option ultimately forcing them to enroll in Medicaid. **\$30 million** would include the \$3.66 minimum wage increase as well as increased authorizations from the current 4 hours per week to 10 hours per week for Personal Care Level 2 and accounts for the rate increase for home care workers including the fringe benefits.

There are 10 counties in New York that have developed and implemented innovative solutions developed by counties to address the home care aide shortage. The County employs the aides who are part of a care team with a care manager. As county employees, they have health and retirement benefits and use of a county vehicle. These innovative models have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated wait lists for home care for office for the aging clients. New York could support this innovation in other parts of the state.

Row Labels	Count of Client ID	Sum of # of Units	Sum of Cost
Wayne - Wayne County DAY - Case Management	132	1663.75	\$149,737.50
Wayne - Wayne County DAY - Consumer Directed IHS	1	38	\$638.40
Wayne - Wayne County DAY - Home Delivered Meals	134	15413.5	\$160,975.00
Wayne - Wayne County DAY - PERS	111	767	\$23,010.00
Wayne - Wayne County DAY - Personal Care	99	7408.84	\$185,221.00
Grand Total	477	25291.09	\$519,581.90

Total Clients Served in 2 or More of the "Flagship Programs" 1st 3 quarters of 2019 166.0

Annualized spending on client services \$692,775.87

Average spent per client PER YEAR \$4,173.35

Annual Cost of Nursing Home care \$145,000.00

Annual savings per client \$140,826.65

Annual savings for 166 clients served \$21,828,130.97

Average time clients are on services 2-3 years depending on program 2.5

Total cost savings for 166 client based on average time spent at home receiving community based services. \$54,570,327.42

Over the past 3 years the % of clients (with a listed closing reason) who were transitioned to a higher level of care or deceased 64.0%

We consider Case Management, Aide Service, Personal Emergency Response units and Home Delivered Meals to be the "flagship" programs that our agency offers. These are services for our non-medicaid senior population that may not be offered affordably anywhere else in the community. This data looked at all the clients we served in these programs from 1/1/19 to 9/30/19. We looked at just individuals who receive 2 or more of those services. As of 9/30/19, there had been 166 un-duplicated (the 477 number is a duplicated count) Wayne County seniors receiving services through 2 or more of our "flagship" programs. The dollar figures at the bottom are a reflection of the actual cost of services to those 166 individuals and what the cost would look like if those same individuals all had to be placed at a nursing home.



2022-23

2023-24

NYSOFA Budget

Enacted Budget

Executive Budget

CSE/EISEP	\$111,365,000 Includes 5.4% COLA	\$113,180,638 Includes 2.5% COLA
WIN (Wellness in Nutrition)	\$33,474,000	\$37,682,638 Includes 2.5% COLA
NORCs & NNORCS	\$8,880,000	\$8,055,000
MCCAP	\$1,767,000	\$1,767,000
Senior Transportation	\$1,121,000	\$1,121,000
Social Model Adult Day Services	\$1,072,000	\$1,072,000
Respite	\$656,000	\$656,000
HIICAP	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
LTCOP	\$3,690,000	\$3,690,000
HIICAP/LTCOP Stipend	\$150,000	\$150,000
Elder Abuse Education & Outreach (Lifespan)	\$1,370,000	\$995,000 -\$375,000
EMDT (Lifespan)	\$500,000	\$500,000
Lifespan Bill Payer Pilot	\$750,000 (In DFS Budget)	\$750,000
CSI	\$403,000	\$403,000
Caregiver Resource Centers	\$353,000	\$353,000
AgingNY Ed & Tech	\$250,000	\$250,000
State match for federal grants	\$175,000	\$175,000
RSVP	\$216,500	\$216,500
Livable NY/Community Empowerment	\$122,500	\$122,500
NYSADSA	\$122,500	\$122,500
Foster Grandparents	\$98,000	\$98,000
Patients' Rights Hotline (Statewide Senior Action)	\$231,500	\$31,500 -\$200,000
Holocaust Survivors Initiative	\$2,600,000	\$1,000,000 -\$1.6million
Master Plan on Aging	\$500,000	\$1,000,000 +\$500,000
GetSetUp Online Classes	\$350,000	\$350,000
Joy for All Companion Pets	\$350,000	\$350,000

SelfHelp Online Classes	\$200,000	\$200,000
Low-Income Older Adults Digital Tech & Affordable Internet	\$700,000	\$700,000
TRUALTA Caregiver Training & Support	\$400,000	\$400,000
GoGoGrandparent Expansion	\$500,000	\$500,000
Assembly Allocation to be done by resolution	\$3,500,000	
Senate Allocation to be done by resolution	\$1,000,000	
Various Programs	\$4,789,000	
TOTAL	\$181,525,500	\$175,050,744