

**New York State Assembly
New York State Senate
FY 2027
Budget Hearing on Human Services**

Thank you Chairs and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dora Fisher, and I am the State Policy Director of LiveOn NY, a statewide coalition representing more than 120 nonprofit organizations that serve older adults in communities across New York. At LiveOn NY, we believe our systems must adapt to meet the rapidly growing needs of New York's aging population to ensure people can age with dignity in the communities they built.

LiveOn NY's members are community-based aging services providers, including senior centers, nutrition programs, caregiver support programs, home-delivered meals, case management, care coordination services, and so much more. Our members see, every day, the urgency of the challenges facing older New Yorkers. For many people who walk through their doors, a congregate meal will be their only hot meal of the day; for a home-delivered meal recipient, the friendly driver is often their only human interaction that day. Increasingly, older adults are arriving at senior centers with complex and urgent needs related to housing insecurity, food access, health, and isolation. These programs do far more than provide services—they offer stability, connection, and dignity, while supporting both physical and mental health.

There is also a strong economic case for investing in these supports. A recent analysis by the McKinsey Health Institute found that for every **\$1 invested annually in healthy aging programs**, society can realize approximately **\$3 in economic and healthcare benefits**. These savings are driven by reductions in avoidable hospitalizations, delayed or prevented nursing home placement, and lower reliance on expensive acute care—outcomes directly associated with services such as in-home care, nutrition programs, transportation, and social engagement opportunities provided by the nonprofit organizations in our membership.

Given what we know about both the growing need for these services and their demonstrated value, LiveOn NY was encouraged when, in 2021, Governor Hochul announced the state's decision to create New York's first-ever **Master Plan for Aging**. The MPA was envisioned as a roadmap to build stronger, better-coordinated systems to support New Yorkers as they age. Over several years, thousands of older adults, providers, advocates, and state and local stakeholders contributed their expertise and lived experience to inform this plan. The publication of the Master Plan for Aging in **June 2025** marked a major milestone for New York State.

With the plan now complete, the critical next step is implementation. In light of the MPA's release, LiveOn NY convened a **consensus workshop** with stakeholders from across the aging services network to identify which proposals should be prioritized for implementation. Through this process, there was clear agreement that the state must begin by fully funding **Proposal #50: Fund Aging Services**.

Proposal #50 calls for a substantial increase in resources for the network of community-based aging services delivered through New York’s **Area Agencies on Aging** and their partners. These services form the backbone of New York’s long-term care infrastructure and include critical supports such as:

- Reducing waiting lists for essential in-home services
- Enhancing home care rates for personal care and case management
- Expanding transportation assistance and social engagement to combat isolation
- Increasing access to evidence-based wellness and preventive interventions
- Strengthening workforce capacity and sustainable nutrition programs
- Expanding eligibility for caregiver supports and respite services
- Supporting technology access and caregiver training
- Investing in legal services, benefits counseling (HIICAP), and Ombudsman programs
- Funding Aging & Disability Resource Centers and other key access points for older adults

Proposal #50 directly addresses longstanding underfunding in community-based services that limits access to care and pushes older New Yorkers toward more costly institutional settings. Increased investment in these services allows more people to age in place with independence and dignity, while easing pressure on hospitals and nursing facilities—making it a fiscally responsible and effective foundation for implementing the Master Plan for Aging.

In addition to fully funding Proposal #50 as the foundation of Master Plan for Aging implementation, LiveOn NY is also advocating for several targeted investments that complement and strengthen the state’s aging infrastructure but fall outside the scope of Proposal #50. These include:

- **\$2 million to create a Resident Advisor Program in affordable senior housing** as part of a \$10 million investment over five years. This program would provide light-touch, non-medical services that help older adults age safely and independently in their homes, while reducing costly hospitalizations and generating Medicaid savings.
- **An additional \$1 million to expand Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)**, bringing total funding to \$9 million. We appreciate the Governor’s continued commitment to NORCs in the Executive Budget and urge the Legislature to build on this support so these programs can meet rising service and workforce costs while delivering proven health and social benefits.
- **\$15 million to support guardianship reform through a statewide initiative of nonprofit guardians**, ensuring that older adults and individuals with disabilities or mental illness who require a surrogate decision-maker have access to qualified, person-centered guardianship services regardless of income or geography.

- **\$875,000 to Expand Elder Abuse and Scam Prevention Programming.** Older adults remain disproportionately targeted by scams and abuse. This investment will strengthen community-based programs to support victims and prevent exploitation. \$500,000 is needed towards scam prevention and training, as well as \$375,000 for elder abuse prevention and victim support.

LiveOn NY urges the Legislature and the Governor to make these essential investments in the FY 2026 budget. The time to act is now—our aging population cannot wait. We look forward to working together to build a stronger, more age-inclusive New York.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
LiveOn NY

***About LiveOn NY:** LiveOn NY's members provide the core, community-based services that allow older adults to thrive in their communities. With a base of more than 100 community-based organizations serving at least 300,000 older New Yorkers annually. Our members provide services ranging from senior centers, congregate and home-delivered meals, affordable senior housing with services, elder abuse prevention services, caregiver supports, case management, transportation, NORCs and NY Connects. LiveOn NY advocates for increased funding for these vital services to improve both the solvency of the system and the overall capacity of community-based service providers.*

LiveOn NY also administers a citywide outreach program that targets seniors in communities where benefits are most underutilized. This program helps to educate thousands of older adults, including those who are homebound, about food assistance options, as well as to screen and enroll those who are eligible for SNAP and SCRIE/DRIE.