

King County Aging Network

2019 State Legislative Priorities

Protect and Strengthen Our Communities for the Future

Our state and region thrive when people of all ages actively participate in their communities, and have equitable access to opportunities, and everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age or ability.

We need your help to ensure that communities in our state are “age-friendly”—places that enable people of all ages and abilities to achieve their potential.

You can help by supporting:

- 1 Affordable and accessible housing and transportation options.**
- 2 Meaningful opportunities for employment, a safe and secure retirement system, and affordable healthcare for all life stages.**
- 3 A strong system of community-based supports for family caregivers, older adults, and people with disabilities, including dementia and Alzheimer’s.**

Washington leads the states on many of these issues, including the quality of our long-term services and supports system—ranked 1st in the nation for quality and cost effectiveness. However, critical maintenance was neglected during the recession, and **revenue is needed** to ensure that the system can effectively respond to our state’s growing older population.

You can help by supporting ongoing efforts across the state to strengthen and sustain this system, such as the work of the Joint Legislative Committee on Aging and Disability and local approaches to transform our state’s health care system.

On the next page, we have listed opportunities for the Washington State Legislature to strengthen the Aging Network in 2019. These priorities were developed in collaboration with the Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Washington Senior Lobby.

If you would like information specific to your legislative district, contact ADS Advisory Council staff liaison Sariga Santhosh at 206-684-0652 or

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What you can do to strengthen Washington State's Aging Network

 <p>Housing</p>	<p>Preserve and increase affordable, accessible housing</p> <p>Affordable housing is the most critical issue facing older adults in our region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support legislation (SB 5160, HB 1181) to enable more older adults to qualify for and make it easier to apply for the Senior Property Tax Exemption program and explore opportunities to extend this benefit to low-income renters. • Continue to invest in the Housing Trust Fund which is critical to increase the supply of affordable units.
 <p>Community-based Supports</p>	<p>Strengthen long-term care services and supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranked by AARP as #1 in the country, Washington State's Medicaid long-term care system has saved the state \$3 billion-plus over 15 years by enabling people to receive care in the lowest cost setting—their homes. • The Governor's budget strengthens this system by providing needed support (\$7.2M) for AAA Case Management clients with complex physical and mental health challenges. An additional \$2.7M is needed to prevent caseloads from increasing. • The Long-Term Care Trust Act (SB 5331, HB 1087) would enable working people to invest in an account that can support the cost of personal care, medical assistance, transportation, meals, and more later in life. This public long-term care benefit would protect both our families and our state's Medicaid system from impoverishment.
 <p>Vulnerable Adults</p>	<p>Support for People with Dementia and their Family Caregivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dementia Action Collaborative has requested \$5.4 million over the next biennium to promote early diagnosis and support for people with dementia and their family caregivers. • This funding will enable our state to build the infrastructure and capacity to respond to this growing need in a cost-effective way.
 <p>Affordable Health Care</p>	<p>Support for People with Hearing Loss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecoils and Bluetooth can significantly expand the use of hearing aids, however, many consumers are not informed about the functions and advantages of these technologies. Proposed legislation by Rep. Dolan and Sen. Palumbo (SB 5210, HB 1078) will ensure that patients receive this information. A few minutes of education can change a person's life.