

King County Aging Network

2020 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 2020. 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 Sariga.Santhosh@seattle.gov.



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



Revenue

Increase funding for vital human services programs

Affordable housing, food insecurity, and basic healthcare are critical issues facing older adults in our region. We need stronger social safety nets to help everyone - regardless of income - reach their full potential. Washington State needs a progressive budget that ensures equitable access to health, safety and opportunity and increases revenue for essential human services programs.



Community-based Supports

Strengthen long-term care services and supports

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. Last year, the Legislature allocated \$1.7M for the biennium to the Medicaid Case Management Program that serves many clients with complex physical and mental health challenges, but the need is growing. Reimbursement rates paid to AAA's have remained flat for more than a decade, resulting in increased caseloads and threatening the long-term stability of this program.



Prescription Drug Costs

Lower costs of lifesaving prescription drugs

Americans pay among the highest drug prices in the world and often skip filling vital prescriptions to pay rent, buy food and afford other critical essentials. In 2017, 33% of Washington state residents reported that they stopped taking prescribed medication due to cost. The high costs of prescription drugs disproportionately impact older adults over 50, but also affect individuals living with manageable chronic health conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. Capping out-of-pocket expenses, creating a central insulin purchasing program, and implementing a prescription affordability and oversight board are a few ways to help lower prices and improve access to life-saving drugs.

