



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
**Department on Aging**

**Jon Janowski**  
Interim Executive Director,  
Department on Aging

**Commission on Aging**

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Chair, Senior Centers Select Committee

**Amber Miller**  
Chair, Service Delivery Committee

**Gloria Miller**  
Chair, Wellness Committee

Ronald Byington  
Janice Wilberg, Ph.D.

January 7, 2021

Hon. Tony Evers  
Governor, State of Wisconsin  
Capitol 115 East  
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Governor Evers,

During these unprecedented times, the voice of older adults and people of color cries out to be heard by our state government. These citizens have experienced isolation, infection, and death from COVID-19 at rates far higher than any other group. As the federally mandated Commission on Aging, representing the voices of more than 160,000 Milwaukeeans over the age of 60, with the largest population of people of color in Wisconsin, we implore you and State Legislature to ensure that our priorities are incorporated into Wisconsin's state budget and its administrative priorities.

We understand that both state and local government have been starved of the funds necessary to adequately address the social, health, and economic crisis brought about by COVID-19. Yet we cannot ignore the impact years of budgetary neglect and disproportionate funding has had on the ability of local government to serve the citizens of Milwaukee County. This consistent lack of state investment and indeed disproportionate disinvestment has been a means to perpetuate racial economic, political, and social segregation at among the highest levels in the nation.

Thus, we call upon you to exercise leadership to address racial disparities as well as to bolster funding for programs that directly support the nearly 20% of our citizenry who are older adults within your proposed 2021-22 Wisconsin State Budget. Specifically, we ask that you include the following priorities:

- 1) Reinvest in Aging and Disability Resource Centers and equalize funding across counties.

Provide an additional \$27.4 million GPR investment to fully fund the current mandated services performed by ADRCs, and provide an additional \$25 million to account for decades of flat funding and to equalize ADRC services across the state, particularly in Milwaukee County, including:

- Elder Benefit Specialists Statewide: \$2,300,000
- Dementia Care Specialist Funding Statewide: \$3,320,000
- Caregiver Support Programs: \$3,600,000
- Senior Health Promotion Services: \$6,000,000
- Long Term Care Transition Services: \$6,000,000
- Tribal Aging and Disability Resources: \$1,180,000
- Aging and Disability Resource Support Systems: \$2,650,000

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Committed to the Independence and Dignity of Older Adults Through Advocacy, Leadership and Service



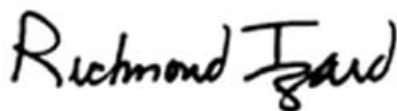
2) Revenue Sharing and Local Sales Tax authorization

State shared revenue such as Community Aids, Youth Aids, and Base County Assessments have been flat for more than a decade. Require shared revenue sources to grow by inflation each year, without offset by other revenues and allow Milwaukee County to impose an additional 1% sales tax on goods and services sold in the County upon approval of a referendum by local residents. Such a tax would generate an additional \$166.3 million for Milwaukee municipalities. The County budget is at an inflection point, and without the ability to raise additional revenues, County services to older adults will face critical cutbacks.

3) Expansion of State Participation in Medicaid under the ACA

Expand Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act to all Wisconsin residents at or below 135% of the federal poverty level to draw down 90% federal Medicaid match funding and reinvest an estimated \$325 million dollars in revenue savings to adequately fund Wisconsin's long term care system, deliver the high quality services promised under the plan benefits, expand benefits and equity of access to meet mental health, transportation, and housing services, and fully fund any gaps in Wisconsin's COVID-19 testing, immunization and contact tracing program to save older adults and reduce their isolation.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration of our budget requests. Please feel free to contact either one of us (Shirley Sharp 414-915-1167 or Richmond Izard 414-737-2167) with any questions or concerns.



Richmond Izard  
Chair, Milwaukee County Commission on Aging



Shirley Sharp  
Chair, COA Advocacy Committee

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