

Subject: FW: State Budget Action Alert: Joint Finance Committee Voting on Transportation Budget Tues. 6/8

Importance: High

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network: Wisconsin Budget Alert – SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION

On Tuesday (6/8), the state legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (JFC) will be voting on the transportation provisions they want to put in the 2021-2023 state budget. Now is the time to put your advocacy skills back in to action!

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) supports **increasing funding for public transit and specialized transportation**. Specific WAAN budget priorities include:

- **A 20% increase (\$183,000) in capital and operation assistance for specialized transportation** (s.85.22) to assist with operations, replacement, or acquisition of new transit vehicles and to expand mobility management services needed to meet our needs as we age. ([The Governor’s 2021-2023 budget includes a 2.5% increase in this funding](#)).
- **Inflationary increases (2.5% in each year of the budget) for mass transit assistance and specialized transportation assistance for counties and tribes** (s.85.20, s.85.21, and s.85.215 respectively) to ensure we can maintain our existing system while setting the stage for increased funding and capacity in the future. ([The Governor’s budget includes a 2.5% increase in mass transit operating assistance \[85.20\] for calendar year 2022 and 2023, Transit Capital Assistance Grants \\$10 million annually, a 2.5% increase in paratransit funding in each year of the budget, and a 5% annual increase in funding for Tribal Elderly Transportation Grants \[85.215\], but does NOT include a funding increase for the Specialized Transportation Program for Counties \[85.21\].](#))

See WAAN’s [Transportation Issue Brief](#).

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau has prepared budget papers on a number of the transportation budget proposals, including [591 - State and Federal Mass Transit Funding](#), [592 - Transit Capital Assistance Grants](#), and [594 - Tribal Elderly Transportation Grants](#). These budget papers include **budget alternatives** for JFC’s consideration for inclusion in their final budget. The alternatives range from proposals mirroring the Governor’s budget proposal, proposals at funding levels lower (or potentially higher) than the Governor’s budget proposal, proposals that change the source of funding, and proposals to “take no action” which would leave funding at current levels.

ACTION STEPS: We need to make our voices heard on budget alternatives that support the aging network priorities, as well as on our priorities that have not yet been included in budget proposals.

- **What You Can Do**

Call or email your state senator and assembly representative and let them know what transportation budget options/priorities you support (see alternatives and priorities below) and how increased transportation funding would impact you or those you serve.

You can find your legislator's contact info by calling the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-362-9472 or by clicking [here](#) and entering your home address under "Who Are My Legislators?".

If your legislator(s) is a member of the [Joint Finance Committee](#) ask him/her to support these options when they vote on Tuesday. If your legislator(s) is not a member of the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) ask him/her to ask their colleague/budget buddy on the JFC to support these alternatives/priorities. (*Any paid staff concerned about lobbying restrictions – you may still contact your own representatives, as well as legislators who represent constituents in the area you serve, to discuss these important priorities and how they impact your community and those you serve without violating lobby laws [avoid asking for support or opposition of specific budget proposals] and of course you may contact your own legislators about anything anytime you are off duty.)

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) supports the following budget alternatives:

- **Paper #591 (State and Federal Mass Transit Funding) –**
Alternative 1. Provide a 2.5% increase in mass transit operating assistance to each tier of mass transit systems for both calendar year 2022 and 2023.
- **Paper #592 (Transit Capital Assistance Grants) –**
Alternative 1. Provide \$10 million annually to a newly-created continuing appropriations to establish a transit capital assistance grant program administered by DOT.
- **Paper #594 (Tribal Elderly Transportation Grants) –**
Alternative 1. Convert base level funding for the tribal elderly grant program, which is currently funded from tribal gaming revenues (PR), to a newly-created SEG appropriation from the transportation fund (my note: program revenues over the past many months were very low due to the pandemic) and increase base funding for the grant program by 5% in each year of the budget.

Additionally, WAAN supports the following proposals and requests their inclusion in the legislature's budget:

- **A 20% increase (\$183,000) in capital and operation assistance for specialized transportation (s.85.22).**
- **A 2.5% increase in each year of the budget for Specialized Transportation Program for Counties (85.21).**

To review all of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau's budget papers released to-date (including additional papers regarding the Transportation budget) go to: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lfb/budget/2021_23_biennial_budget/102_budget_papers