

New Hampshire State Commission on Aging

Established in 2019, the 26-member State Commission on Aging advises the Governor and General Court on critical policies and planning in response to our rapidly aging population. The Commission is proactively tackling the permanent demographic shift underway in New Hampshire. Its focus includes reforming systems of care, employment models, housing and transportation options, and leveraging the valuable contributions of our experienced older residents.

New Hampshire Needs a Commission on Aging – Now More Than Ever

- **The Demographic Reality:** New Hampshire is the second-oldest state in the nation. Currently, 20% of our population is 65 or older. This isn't a temporary trend; by 2030, older adults will outnumber children in the state – a significant and permanent demographic change.
- **The Preference and Fiscal Sense of Aging in Place:** Most New Hampshire residents wish to age in their own homes. Providing the necessary support for them to do so is not only what our citizens want but is also significantly more cost-effective for both individuals and the state compared to institutional care. A comprehensive system of care is essential, including a sufficient direct care workforce and robust support for informal caregivers.
- **Immediate Action is Economically Prudent:** Addressing the housing, transportation, and nutritional needs of older adults through improved policies, systems, and infrastructure requires immediate attention. Meeting these basic needs keep people out of hospitals and in their homes.

The Smart Investment: Value for New Hampshire

A modest investment in the State Commission on Aging yields significant returns:

- **Leveraging Expert Volunteers:** The Commission comprises experienced leaders in a variety of fields from across New Hampshire, appointed by the Governor, who proactively research policy recommendations at no cost to the state.
- **Enhanced State Agency Collaboration:** Eight state agencies actively participate in the Commission, fostering improved efficiency, communication, and coordination of services, breaking down bureaucratic silos.
- **Objective and Transparent Approach:** The Commission is non-partisan, independent of special interests, and considers diverse perspectives from consumers to providers, as well as those from a statewide level to those from a community viewpoint. Transparency in the work is paramount.
- **Addressing Key Cost Drivers:**
 - **Improved Care Coordination for Cost Savings:** The Commission is working to better coordinate care, recognizing that many older adults currently occupying expensive acute-care hospital beds could be appropriately discharged with the right community-based resources. Provider groups are looking to the Commission for impartial solutions. **Investing in these solutions now will demonstrably reduce future healthcare expenditures.**
 - **Optimizing the Economy through Intergenerational Workplaces:** With 30% of New Hampshire's workforce over 55 as of April 2024, older adults are a vital part of our economy. The Commission is exploring ways to foster intergenerational workplaces to maximize their contributions. **Failing to support and engage this growing segment of the workforce will hinder economic growth and potentially increase reliance on state support.**

In conclusion, the work of the State Commission on Aging is not just about addressing the current needs of our aging population; it is a crucial investment in New Hampshire's future fiscal stability.

Failing to proactively address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of our demographic shift now will inevitably lead to significantly higher costs for the state in the years to come. **Investing in the Commission's efforts is a fiscally responsible approach to ensuring a sustainable and supportive future for all New Hampshire residents.**

Examples of the Commission's Proactive Efforts:

- Currently engaging four state agencies to conduct a community transportation needs assessment. The assessment will identify mobility gaps and optimize resources for older adults, people living with disabilities, and veterans to improving access to essential services and social connections. **Addressing these transportation needs now will prevent increased isolation and potential future demands on state-funded support services.**
- Successfully forged consensus on the new Certified Assisted Living Medication Assistant role, addressing workforce shortages in assisted living while maintaining quality of care. **This proactive approach prevents potential crises in care provision and the associated higher costs.**
- Actively engaged in ongoing efforts to support Systems of Care for Healthy Aging implementation and improvements. A fully functional system of care will keep nursing home beds available for those who truly need them and will have other robust community options to support the majority of people to age in their homes and out of hospitals. Home based care is significantly less expensive than institutional care. **Investing in these community-based options now is a direct strategy to mitigate future, far greater institutional care costs.**

Highlights of SFY 26/27 Budget

- We are a small agency with very basic office operations. 85% of FY25 budget is for salary and benefits. Currently, there is one full-time staff person, 1 part-time at 20 hours per week, and one part-time at 16 hours per week.
- The Governor's FY 26 and 27 budgets reflected a reduction in Class 50 - a loss of 5 hours/week of part-time assistance. This is a significant loss in a small office.
- **The budget on the next page is a new even smaller budget incorporating changes sent to the LBA last week. It presents a 12% reduction from the Governor's FY26 budget.** Class 10 reflects a reduction in salary and Class 27 is reduced by removing the purchase of a replacement laptop. The budget is approximately \$250,000 per year of the biennium.
- Still, you will note increases on some lines:
 - Class 60 – Benefits. This is the largest increase to this budget compared to previous years. Health Insurance benefits we inaccurately determined for the FY 24/25 biennium and are corrected in this budget.
 - Increases in all other lines, except for class 46, the Consultants line, are the largely the cost of keeping the lights on and not controllable. Those increases were required by DAS, the agency in which the Commission is administratively attached.
 - The increase to the Consultants line is to make the Commission compliant with federal regulations in the ADA. Our meetings are public, and communication access is a requirement. We have members and members of the public attend who are Deaf or are hard of hearing. CART reporting (Whereby spoken word is written and displayed in real time on a screen) is needed. \$3,500 is needed for these purposes.
- HB 2 as amended by the House, removed sections relevant to the Commission. We ask the following changes to be included in the final version of HB2:

Commission on Aging Established; Membership. Amend RSA 19-P:1, IV to read as follows: IV. The members appointed pursuant to subparagraph II(j) shall serve ~~[2-year]~~ **3-year** terms *effective for appointments made after July 1, 2025*; provided that initially such members shall serve staggered terms and no such member shall serve more than 2 consecutive terms, with the exception of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and recorder, who may service an additional term for a total of 3 terms. A council member whose term of office is expiring may continue beyond the end of the term until reappointed or until a successor is nominated. Legislative members shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when attending to the duties of the commission. The first named member of the house of representatives shall convene the organizational meeting of the commission on or before 45 days of passage of this chapter for the purpose of electing officers serving on the commission. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. If any member is absent without previously being excused by the chairperson for 3 or more regular meetings, the member may be removed upon a majority vote of the commission.

The request is simply to lengthen the term of Governor appointed members of the Commission from 2 years to 3 on a going forward basis. Commission members agree that the current terms are too short. Just as one gets up to speed, having learned enough to make significant contributions to the work, their term is up. It's a small change that will make a big difference in the quality of the work the Commission produces.

New Hampshire State Commission on Aging

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Class	FY24 Actual	FY25 Adj Auth	FY26 Gov Recommend	FY27 Gov Recommend	Reductions to FY26	Proposed New Budget FY26	Reductions to FY27	Proposed New Budget FY27
APPROPRIATION								
010-Personal Services-Perm. Classi	103,209	104,820	110,766	113,646	(30,689)	80,078	(29,856)	83,790
018-Overtime	0	1	1	1		0		0
020-Current Expenses	1,274	1,050	1,355	1,311		1,355		1311
022-Rents-Leases Other Than State	560	1,000	900	900		900		900
027-Transfers To OIT	2,289	7,176	8,198	7,013	(1,834)	6,364		7,013
028-Transfers to Plant & Prop	9,451	10,389	10,968	11,143		10,968		11,143
030-Equipment New/Replacement	50	1	500	1		500		1
037-Technology - Hardware	1,968	1	1	1		1		1
038-Technology - Software	0	1	1	1		1		1
039-Telecommunications	750	2,086	2,355	2,355		2,355		2,355
046-Consultants	3,500	2,500	7,000	3,500		7,000		3,500
049-Transfer to Other State Agencies	36	38	114	114		114		114
050-Personal Service-Temp/Appointed	29,683	63,604	54,822	55,981		54,822		55,981
057-Books, Periodicals, Subscriptions	630	1,980	2,195	2,415		2,195		2,415
060-Benefits	60,123	27,728	72,323	76,301		72,323		76,301
062-Workers Compensation	290	289	417	447		417		447
066-Employee training	770	2,000	2,000	1,800		2,000		1,800
070-In-State Travel Reimbursement	679	3,000	1,500	1,500		1,500		1,500
080-Out-Of State Travel	2,534	4,200	2,700	2,700		2,700		2,700
089-Transfer to DAS Maintenance Fu	572	572	810	810		810		810
FUNDING								
00S-General Fund	(218,368)	(232,436)	(278,926)	(281,940)	(32,523)	(246,403)	(29,856)	(252,083)
POSITION								
FTE1-Permanent Classified	1	1	1	1	1		1	
Percent Decrease Reduced Budget vs Governor's Budget					(12%)		(11%)	