

BOARD ON AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Source of Funds	FY25 Adjusted Base	FY26 Recommended	% Change Over FY25	FY27 Recommended	% Change Over FY26
GPR	1,967,300	2,379,100	20.9	2,430,600	2.2
PR-S	2,277,200	2,691,900	18.2	2,695,600	0.1
TOTAL	4,244,500	5,071,000	19.5	5,126,200	1.1

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITION SUMMARY

Source of Funds	FY25 Adjusted Base	FY26 Recommended	FTE Change Over FY25	FY27 Recommended	FTE Change Over FY26
GPR	21.13	24.28	3.15	24.28	0.00
PR-S	25.37	26.22	0.85	26.22	0.00
TOTAL	46.50	50.50	4.00	50.50	0.00

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The board was created by Chapter 20, Laws of 1981. The board consists of seven citizen members who are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate to a fixed five-year term. In addition to the required annual reporting, the board sends a comprehensive biennial report to the Governor and Legislature regarding the agency's activities relating to long-term care for the aging and disabled individuals who are aged 60 and over and insurance counseling services provided to Medicare-eligible persons. The board monitors federal, state and local laws and regulations that relate to the provision of services to the clients that it serves, and advocates for passage of legislative and administrative action to correct inadequacies in these laws.

The board promotes a coordinated and comprehensive long-term care system. The board serves the individual; monitors the development, implementation and outcome of long-term care policy; makes recommendations to the Governor, Legislature and Wisconsin congressional delegation; stimulates public interest; and provides public education regarding universal issues affecting long-term care.

The agency is composed of an executive director, leadership team and staff who operate the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Volunteer Ombudsman and Medigap Helpline programs.

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Through its Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the board investigates complaints relating to the health safety, care and treatment of clients receiving long-term care and serves as mediator or advocate in efforts to resolve problems. Ombudsman program staff provides advice and assistance to persons seeking resolution of disputes involving the state's Family Care, Partnership and Community Options programs up to and including assisting clients by providing individual case advocacy services in administrative hearings regarding Family Care services or benefits. The program also provides education to the public and training to long-term care providers to improve long-term care for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program recruits and trains volunteers to assist the regional ombudsmen, acting as advocates for long-term care consumers in nursing homes. The board also promotes public education to improve long-term care for older adults and disabled individuals. Volunteers conduct weekly unannounced visits to their assigned nursing home and report resident concerns to the facility administration and regional ombudsmen for investigation and resolution.

Through the Medigap Helpline Program, the agency provides information and assistance to older adults and individuals with disabilities regarding all forms of private and government-sponsored health insurance. The helpline focuses on Medicare and related private insurance plans, notably Medicare Supplemental policies, Medicare Advantage plans, long-term care insurance, Veterans Administration benefits and other health insurance options available to Medicare beneficiaries.

MISSION

The mission of the board is to advocate for the interests of the state's long-term care consumers and Medicare beneficiaries, to inform those consumers of their rights and to educate the public at large about Medicare, health care systems and long-term care.

The board is the premier resource for information and advocacy for our client population, and is an integral part of the ever-changing system for long-term care delivery in Wisconsin. The board will increase its visibility by expanding its role and recognition as a leader and model of advocacy on the state and national stage.

The board subscribes to and defends the values of: respect and dignity for the individual; protection of the right of the individual to be free from threats to health, safety and quality of life; fairness and transparency; and open, clear and consistent communication. Its staff and volunteers provide valuable services consistent with the spirit and intent of these values.

PROGRAMS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Program 1: Identification of the Needs of the Aged and Disabled

Goal: To protect the rights and promote empowerment, through systems change and self-advocacy, of persons age 60 and older who are recipients of facility-based, managed long-term care or self-directed supports services.

Objective/Activity: Identify and investigate concerns and complaints received via the board intake telephone line, the Ombudsman Program online complaint system and other methods of registering a complaint.

Objective/Activity: Educate and empower residents, tenants, members, participants and others regarding rights, ombudsman role and function, and provider responsibilities.

Objective/Activity: Educate current and new providers regarding ombudsman authority, role and function and provider responsibilities related to resident, tenant, member and participant rights.

Objective/Activity: Review, develop and disseminate informational and educational materials that are inclusive and ensure consumers are represented and informed.

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Goal: The board's Volunteer Ombudsman Program will encourage resident participation in scheduled resident council meetings in skilled nursing facilities in the program's designated service area.

Objective/Activity: Volunteer ombudsmen will encourage and empower resident participation by inviting residents individually to attend resident council meetings. Volunteer ombudsmen will attend resident council meetings with the permission or invitation of the resident council president. A volunteer's role is to advocate for the residents' individual rights and to share concerns with the consent of the residents.

Goal: Improve public education and outreach to consumers on issues related to Medicare, Medicare Supplemental insurance, Medicare Advantage plans and Medicare Part D (prescription drug), and transitional issues from Marketplace or Medicaid programs to Medicare and related forms of insurance.

Objective/Activity: The board will educate and empower the public via outreach efforts, including personal appearances by staff at public forums, in order to achieve the goal of making the Medigap Helpline Program a resource that is recognized by Wisconsin seniors as a reliable and trustworthy source of accurate information about Medicare Supplemental, Medicare Advantage, Medicare Part D and related insurance products. Greater statewide outreach efforts in the form of in-person contacts with local groups of Medicare-eligible individuals are being used to advance this goal.

Goal: Utilize the Medigap Volunteer Program to improve the ability of the program to provide services to more Medicare beneficiaries.

Objective/Activity: Deploy effectively trained and supervised volunteers to assist with everyday office duties and finding the appropriate plans for Medicare Part D, which will allow the Medigap Helpline and Medigap Part D Helpline staff responsible for increasingly complex Medicare programs to focus on providing accurate and timely counseling.

Objective/Activity: Train volunteers to perform referral calls to allow additional time for counselors to assist callers with Medicare issues.

Goal: Refine, simplify, expand and publicize the available information services provided by the board.

Objective/Activity: The board's website will include up-to-date information on the agency's programs addressing issues of importance to persons in need of long-term care services or insurance for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023¹	Goal 2024	Actual 2024¹
1.	Number of complaints investigated by ombudsmen on behalf of long-term care consumers.	3,275	2,091	3,285	2,838
1.	Number of education programs given to long-term care consumers by ombudsman program staff.	120	36	125	119
1.	Number of education programs given to long-term care providers by ombudsman program staff.	85	56	110	98
1.	Number of consultations given to long-term care providers by ombudsman program staff.	150	2,626	155	1,874
1.	Number of times volunteer ombudsmen and volunteer coordinators attend resident councils with facility visits.	225	102	230	251
1.	Number of outreach presentations by Medigap program staff.	80	36	85	64
1.	Number of Medigap program volunteer hours provided.	1,200	104	1,250	153
1.	Number of plan finders run by Medigap Helpline staff for beneficiaries.	650	665	675	359
1.	Number of closed calls by Medigap Helpline.	10,000	8,829	10,200	8,982
1.	Number of hits on the board's website. ²	40,000	14,570	45,000	24,901

Note: Based on fiscal year.

¹Some actuals were less than projected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

²Actuals reflect the transition to a new traffic analytics platform.

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2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure¹	Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
1.	Number of complaints investigated by ombudsmen on behalf of long-term care consumers.	2,600	2,650	2,700
1.	Number of education programs given to long-term care consumers by ombudsman program staff.	120	120	120
1.	Number of education programs given to long-term care providers by ombudsman program staff.	100	100	100
1.	Number of consultations given to long-term care providers by ombudsman program staff.	1,700	1,750	1,775
1.	Number of resident council visits made by volunteer program.	175	200	225
1.	Number of facility visits made by volunteer program.	1,000	1,100	1,200
1.	Number of outreach events by Medigap program staff.	85	90	95
1.	Number of Medigap program volunteer hours provided. ²	200	250	300
1.	Number of Medicare beneficiaries helped with prescription drug coverage. ³	675	700	725
1.	Number of closed calls by Medigap Helpline.	10,200	10,400	10,600
1.	Minutes of insurance counseling by Medigap Helpline.	325,000	350,000	375,000

Note: Based on fiscal year.

¹Performance measures and goals have been added or modified for the upcoming biennium.

²Goal has been reduced due to program staffing changes and challenges recruiting volunteers.

³Reflects updated language to explain Medigap Part D Helpline counseling for prescription drug coverage.

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GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ombudsman Program and Administrative Staff
2. Standard Budget Adjustments

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**Table 1
Department Budget Summary by Funding Source (in thousands of dollars)**

	ACTUAL FY24	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST		GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION	
			FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
GENERAL PURPOSE REVENUE	\$1,991.0	\$1,967.3	\$2,546.6	\$2,643.4	\$2,379.1	\$2,430.6
State Operations	1,991.0	1,967.3	2,546.6	2,643.4	2,379.1	2,430.6
PROGRAM REVENUE (2)	\$2,891.6	\$2,277.2	\$2,782.1	\$2,810.2	\$2,691.9	\$2,695.6
State Operations	2,891.6	2,277.2	2,782.1	2,810.2	2,691.9	2,695.6
TOTALS - ANNUAL	\$4,882.5	\$4,244.5	\$5,328.7	\$5,453.6	\$5,071.0	\$5,126.2
State Operations	4,882.5	4,244.5	5,328.7	5,453.6	5,071.0	5,126.2

(2) Includes Program Revenue-Service and Program Revenue-Other

**Table 2
Department Position Summary by Funding Source (in FTE positions)**

	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST		GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION	
		FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
GENERAL PURPOSE REVENUE	21.13	26.88	26.88	24.28	24.28
State Operations	21.13	26.88	26.88	24.28	24.28
PROGRAM REVENUE (2)	25.37	27.62	27.62	26.22	26.22
State Operations	25.37	27.62	27.62	26.22	26.22
TOTALS - ANNUAL	46.50	54.50	54.50	50.50	50.50
State Operations	46.50	54.50	54.50	50.50	50.50

(2) Includes Program Revenue-Service and Program Revenue-Other

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**Table 3
Department Budget Summary by Program (in thousands of dollars)**

	ACTUAL FY24	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST		GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION	
			FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
1. Identification of the needs of the aged and disabled	\$4,882.5	\$4,244.5	\$5,328.7	\$5,453.6	\$5,071.0	\$5,126.2
TOTALS	\$4,882.5	\$4,244.5	\$5,328.7	\$5,453.6	\$5,071.0	\$5,126.2

**Table 4
Department Position Summary by Program (in FTE positions)**

	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST		GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION	
		FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
1. Identification of the needs of the aged and disabled	46.50	54.50	54.50	50.50	50.50
TOTALS	46.50	54.50	54.50	50.50	50.50

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1. Ombudsman Program and Administrative Staff

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	349,400	5.75	442,500	5.75	181,900	3.15	229,700	3.15
PR-S	197,400	3.25	250,000	3.25	107,200	1.85	135,400	1.85
TOTAL	546,800	9.00	692,500	9.00	289,100	5.00	365,100	5.00

The Governor recommends providing position and expenditure authority in the board's Ombudsman Program to continue to provide quality service to the increasing caseload of persons age 60 and older who are consumers of Wisconsin long-term care programs. The Governor also recommends providing position and expenditure authority to the board to enhance administrative support and program capacity to meet increasing demand for its services.

2. Standard Budget Adjustments

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	229,900	0.00	233,600	0.00	229,900	0.00	233,600	0.00
PR-S	307,500	-1.00	283,000	-1.00	307,500	-1.00	283,000	-1.00
TOTAL	537,400	-1.00	516,600	-1.00	537,400	-1.00	516,600	-1.00

The Governor recommends adjusting the board's base budget for: (a) removal of noncontinuing elements from the base (-\$76,300 in FY26 and -\$101,800 in FY27 and -1.0 FTE position in each year); (b) full funding of continuing position salaries and fringe benefits (\$597,100 in each year); (c) reclassifications and semiautomatic pay progression (\$3,400 in FY26 and \$6,600 in FY27); and (d) full funding of lease and directed moves costs (\$13,200 in FY26 and \$14,700 in FY27).

