



Massachusetts
Councils On Aging

March 21, 2019

To the 191st General Court:

On behalf of the 350 cities and towns that have established a municipally based Council on Aging, we want to thank members of the 190th General Court for their support of increasing the COA Formula Grant to \$12/elder this year. This form of local aid will allow COAs to augment their municipal budgets to expand existing services and programs that are designed to help residents of our Commonwealth age 60 and over. We are truly grateful that so many of you made COAs a priority when you spoke to the Ways and Means Chairs and then lobbied the Speaker and the President for final passage.

As we begin the 191st General Court's legislative session that will span 2019-2020, we want to outline our requests of the Legislature.

FY20 Budget Line Items:

Line Item 9110-9002 is comprised of two parts: The Formula Grant (FG) and the Service Incentive Grant (SIG). At \$12/elder the total needed for the FG is \$ 15,453,216 with a minimum of \$6000 for smaller COAs. The SIG grants traditionally have been 10% above the FG figure or in this case \$1,545,322 for a total of \$16,998,538 or \$17m. In FY19 the EOEI Secretary approved SIG funding for local transportation and outreach projects; statewide licenses for Benefits Checkup and Aging Mastery Programs; job fair, housing, and benefits counseling programs; diversity training, retirement planning, and caregiver support; training and technical assistance for COA staff and board; systems inventory; support for age and dementia friendly initiatives; a grant writer who brings into the COA network 15x her salary; and oversight of the elder mental health demonstration projects. If Line Item #9110-9002 funding does not receive the full 10% -above Formula Grant need – then all or some of these projects would need to be cut. House 1 the Governor's proposal underfunded the SIG program by \$484,875 by proposing an allocation of only \$16,515,125, a 28.5% shortfall. The original source of the short funding can be traced to the FY18 "9c cut" of this line item of 3% and was never restored. **Fully funding SIG means an allocation of \$17m in line item #9110-9002.**

Geriatric Mental Health Services Program: Our second budgetary request is to restore line item 9110-1640 Elder Mental Health, which was eliminated during the Great Recession in FY12. Currently, funding for the Geriatric Mental Health Services Programs exists through an earmark within line item 5046-0000. We simply request to restore 9110-1640, move said funds with it, and eliminate the earmark. Currently this \$500,000 earmark funds 5 Elder Mental Health Outreach Teams across our Commonwealth. In House 1 Governor Baker does restore line item 9110-1640 and proposes an allocation of \$500,000. Elder Advocates would prefer a larger allocation of \$800,000 to start three new projects in FY20. **We request to transfer earmark back into the re-established line item #9110-1640 with an allocation of \$800,000.**

Medicare Savings Program (MSP): In addition, MCOA fully supports the Governor's inclusion of the **Medicare Savings Program** in House 1 and we hope that the legislature concurs with his recommendation for FY20. This valuable program will go a long way to help low income older people "age in place" in our Commonwealth. Concurrently filed as H.1199 and S.699 "An Act regarding Medicare savings programs eligibility By Steven Ultrino, Jason Lewis and others relative to Medicare savings programs eligibility. Sent to Health Care Financing. **Fix the Senior Health Care Cliff**

2019-2020 Legislative Session: Proposed Legislation

FY20 Budget Line Items (continued)

Elder Nutrition: Governor Baker's FY20 Budget Proposal, House 1, also included a substantial increase of Elder Nutrition, the first significant increase in several years that factors in the rising cost of food, transportation and staffing to produce the congregate and home meals that our Commonwealth needs. MCOA strongly supports this higher allocation and hopes the legislature concurs. **Fund 9110-1900 at \$9,707,559.**

2019-2020 Legislative Session: Proposed Legislation:

As MCOA reviews legislation germane to older people of our Commonwealth, we have endorsed the following pieces of legislation that have been filed in the 191th General Court session. This list will continue to be revised all additional proposals are vetted by our legislative team.

S.1692 An Act providing property tax relief for older adults: By Edward J. Kennedy, David Allen Robertson, Patrick M. O'Connor, Michael O. Moore and other members of the General Court for legislation to provide property tax relief for older adults. Sent to Revenue.

S.945 An Act relative to the expansion of the Good Samaritan law: By Anne M. Gobi, Denise Provost and Susannah M. Whipples for legislation relative to the expansion of the Good Samaritan law. Sent to Judiciary.

H.1348 An Act relative to the expansion of the Good Samaritan law: By Donald R. Berthiaume, Jr. and others relative to liability of persons in transit in private vehicles rendering care and assistance to persons in need. Sent to Judiciary.

S.678 & H.1173 An Act improving public health through a common application for core food, health and safety-net programs: By Sal N. DiDomenico, Paul A. Schmid, III, Jason M. Lewis, Mary S. Keefe and other members of the General Court for legislation to improve public health through a common application for core food, health and safety-net programs. Sent to Health Care Financing.

H.622 An Act relative to construction and rehabilitation of senior centers: By James J. O'Day and others for legislation to establish a senior center assistance board to assist in the construction or rehabilitation of facilities housing senior centers. Sent to Elder Affairs.

S.372 An Act relative to reserving beds in nursing homes during certain leaves of absence: By Mark C. Montigny, Sean Garballey, Michael F. Rush, Tram T. Nguyen and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to reserving beds in nursing homes during certain leaves of absence. Sent to Elder Affairs

S.357 An Act increasing the personal needs allowance for residents of long term care facilities: By Patricia D. Jehlen, Jason M. Lewis, Steven Ultrino, John H. Rogers and other members of the General Court for legislation to increase the personal care allowance of residents of long-term care facilities. Sent to Elder Affairs.

H.607 An Act increasing the personal needs allowance for residents of long term care facilities: By Sean Garballey and others for legislation to increase the personal needs allowance for certain elderly and disabled residents residing in licensed medical facilities. Sent to Elder Affairs.

S.355 & H.613 An Act relative to intensive case management for clinically complex older adults: By Cindy F. Friedman, James B. Eldridge, Kay Khan, Bradford Hill and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to intensive case management for clinically complex older adults. Sent to Elder Affairs.

2019-2020 Legislative Session: Proposed Legislation (continued)

S.354 & H612 An Act promoting affordability of home care services: By Julian Cyr, James B. Eldridge, Kay Khan, Bradford Hill and other members of the General Court for legislation to promote affordability of home care services. Sent to Elder Affairs.

S.358 & H630 An Act relative to home care: By Patricia D. Jehlen, Jason M. Lewis, Mathew J. Muratore, James B. Eldridge and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to home care. Sent to Elder Affairs.

S.64 & H.172 An Act relative to supported decision-making agreements for certain adults with disabilities: By Joan B. Lovely, Rebecca L. Rausch, Mike Connolly, Michael D. Brady, Aaron Vega, Paul Tucker and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to supported decision-making agreements for certain adults with disabilities. Sent to Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

H.2606 & S.702 An Act to Establish the Family Caregiving Tax Credit: By David Rogers, Jason Lewis and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish the family caregiver tax credit. Sent to Health Care Financing.

H.1075 and S.602 An Act to establish the Massachusetts secure choice retirement program and expand the Massachusetts CORE plan to all employers: By Tram T. Nguyen, Pat Jehlen and others for legislation to establish the Massachusetts secure choice retirement program and expand the Massachusetts CORE plan to all employers. Financial Services.

In addition, we welcome any opportunity to vet and possibly support legislation that improves the lives of older adults of our Commonwealth. Let us know of your proposals.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and your support of the Commonwealth's older adults.



Rebecca Moriarty
MCOA President and
Director, Hampden Council on Aging



Jayne Colino
MCOA Legislative Chair and
Director, Newton Council on Aging