

January 11, 2020

To the 192nd General Court:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Association of Council on Aging and Senior Center Directors representing 350 communities that have established a municipally based Council on Aging, we express our gratitude for the FY'21 budget that included:

- An additional \$200,000 in line item 9110-1640 to increase behavioral health services for older adults;
- An additional \$1 million to strengthen our Commonwealth's SHINE Program, from an earmark within line item #9110-1455;
- Additional funding for the HIP and MEFAP programs and language to develop the SNAP Gap/Common App within in the MassHealth line item 4000-0300; and
- \$17 million (excluding earmarks) in line item 9110-9002 that will maintain the Formula Grant at \$12/elder/year and fully fund the Service Incentive Grant Program.

We are extremely grateful to the legislature and the Governor for the FY'21 GAA.

January usually marks the beginning of the deliberations over the next year's budget; thus, we wanted to share with you our FY'22 requests for your consideration:

- Now, more than ever, any increase to Line Item #9110-1640 would be welcomed to further develop the Behavioral Health Services to our Commonwealth's 1.7million older adults. The current allocation of \$1 million provides services to less than 10% of the population and we join with advocates from across the Behavioral Health and Elder Care networks requesting additional funding.
- The additional \$1 million allocation in FY'21, within Line Item #9110-1655, earmarked for the SHINE program will continue to be needed next year to augment dwindling Federal funding.
- We also hope that the additional funds for HIP and MEFAP in the FY'21 budget are again included for FY'22 since this COVID recession has increased food insecurity across our Commonwealth.

As to Line Item #9110-9002- Local Aid to municipally based Councils on Aging, this is a more complicated request.

Within this line item, two programs are funded: The Service Incentive Grant program (SIG) and the Formula Grant Program (FG). SIG was the original intent of the line item back in FY'80 and was established to build capacity, promote regionalization, and foster innovation. The Formula Grant was developed for FY'82 using US Census results to fund a per capita allocation to augment local budgets that focused on services and programs for older adults. Over the last two decades, the Line Item has been split roughly to 90% FG and 10% SIG.

For the last three years the Legislature has ensured that, the Formula Grant has been set at \$12/elder/year= “a buck a month” and the Service Incentive Grant Program is fully funded. The line item allocation since FY’19 has been set at \$17 million once the earmarks are deducted.

The Service Incentive Grants (SIG) are competitive, align with priorities set by the Administration and Legislature and have focused on transportation, outreach to underserved populations, job training and promotion of volunteer opportunities, respite, expanding economic assistance and nutritional services to older adults at risk, establishing and disseminating best practices especially during this time of COVID (e.g. reopening protocols, online consumer training, etc.), Grandparents raising Grandchildren support, Statewide licenses for AMP and Brain Training, and the match needed for grants from the federal ACL respite grant and from Tufts Health Plan Foundation for Dementia Friendly MA.

The 2020 US Census is set to be released in time to be a factor in the FY’22 Formula Grant. The Donahue Institute/UMASS Amherst projects that because over the last decade most of the boomers have turned sixty, there will be approximately 450,000 more older adults in our Commonwealth.

| 2010 US Census count 60+ Population | 2020 US Census estimate of 60+ Population by the Donahue Institute UMASS/ Amherst |
|--|--|
| 1,273,271 | 1,721,462 |
| | Increase over 2010 = 448,191 |

With 450,000 older adults factored into the Formula, maintaining the 90/10 ration (FG/SIG) and fully funding SIG, \$6 million more is needed for FY’22.

We have informed our members that even in the best of times, a \$6 million increase on a \$17 million budget would be unlikely and they should expect a phased in approach over the next 2-3 years to return to the \$12/elder/YEAR local aid. Similar step backs occurred after the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census. But we do hope to restore the “one buck a month” Formula Grant as soon as feasible.

We have done the calculations and they are available for your review or download at <https://mcoaonline.com/2020/12/04/impact-of-2020-us-census-on-the-coa-formula-grant-projections/> This spreadsheet indicates a town-by-town listing not only of the 2010 Census count and the 2020 projections provided by the Donahue Institute; but also the detailed calculations by town of the impact the changes to their count will bring. We have factored in level funding at \$17 million, which reduces to the Formula to \$9/elder/YEAR which was last allocated in FY’16 and then in three steps which roughly corresponds with an additional dollar to the Formula Grant for every \$2 million allocated.

| Line Item #9110-9002 | In FY22 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| @ \$17million | @ \$17million | @ \$19million | @ \$21million | @ \$23million |
| The allocation to Line Item #9110-9002 for FY19, FY20, and FY21 (3 year level funding) excluding earmarks has been \$17million = \$12/elder/YEAR Formula Grant and full funding of Service Incentive Grants | If level funding at \$17million for FY22 then the Formula Grant would be reduced to \$9/elder/YEAR with corresponding allocation for SIG | If an additional \$2million could be allocated then the Formula Grant would only be reduced to \$10/elder/YEAR with corresponding allocation for SIG | If an additional \$4million could be allocated then the Formula Grant would only be reduced to \$11/elder/YEAR with corresponding allocation for SIG | To Maintain \$12/elder/YEAR Formula Grant and fully fund SIG an additional \$6million is needed |

Our advocacy teams will be in contact in February to set a meeting time by Zoom or phone to review the projections we have outlined above.

We know next year’s budget will be tough, but we are hoping that the House and the Senate, in your FY’22 proposals, will start the process to build back to the \$12/elder Formula Grant with at least a \$3 million increase.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of the Commonwealth’s older adults.

Sincerely,




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