



Pennsylvania Alliance of Retirement Community Residents

Legislative Tidbit

Joan W. Martin, Legislative Affairs Director

Email: legislative@parcr.org

Below is information excerpted from LeadingAge PA:

Proposed 2024-2025 Budget for the Commonwealth

On February 6, 2024, Governor Shapiro shared his executive budget for state fiscal year 2024-25. Shapiro's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget has \$48.339 billion in General Fund expenditures, which is a \$3.253 billion (7.22%) increase over the current fiscal year.

Like last year, the Governor's address did not include specific reference to any increase to Medicaid funding for a rate increase for nursing homes or the Living Independence for the Elderly (LIFE) program. However, the budget process is only just beginning, and we will continue to evaluate additional details in the Governor's Executive Budget proposal and PA Department of Human Services' (DHS) budget materials as they become available.

The proposed budget does include funds supporting affordable housing needs for seniors, including an increase to the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE) cap (as many of you advocated for through our Call to Action) and investment in homeless assistance and prevention programs. And while there has been some acknowledgment by the administration of meeting the needs of older Pennsylvanians generally, we will continue to fight on your behalf to ensure that the administration and General Assembly recognize the critical need for funds to also be included in the final budget specifically toward rate increases for nursing homes and the LIFE program.

LeadingAge PA's initial review of the budget has identified the following items that will be of interest to our members:

- \$11.7 million to begin implementing PA's Master Plan for Older Adults, titled "Aging Our Way, PA" to help foster an inclusive and supportive environment for older Pennsylvanians and their caregivers.

- \$10 million to permanently codify the newly created Long-Term Care Transformation Office at the Department of Health to provide guidance, support, and technical assistance to avoid nursing facility closures, support the workforce, and ensure the health and safety of residents.
- Creating more affordable housing by initiating a phased increase to the PHARE cap, which would reach \$100 million by 2027-28.
- \$10 million toward homeless assistance and prevention programs.
- \$5.2 million to help find safe and emergency housing or placement for older Pennsylvanians in need of protective services or who are hard to place upon release from prison.
- \$10 million increase to the PENNCARE program from the Lottery Fund to help AAAs allocate the necessary infrastructure that stabilizes the elder care workforce supporting older Pennsylvanians.
- \$1.9 million toward creation of an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Division at the Department of Aging to support this vulnerable population and their caregivers.
- \$765,000 to support recruiting and retaining quality assurance inspectors in long-term care facilities to respond to complaints timely and ensure stability within long-term care facilities.
- \$16 million to increase the minimum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit for individuals from \$23/month to \$35/month.
- \$2 million toward a new walk-in outreach center to aid servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

LeadingAge PA will continue to review the governor's proposed budget and provide further information on the specifics as they become available. If you would like to read more details, the full budget documents can be found [here](#).

Governor Shapiro's budget address marks the start of the budget negotiation process, and LeadingAge PA stands ready to take this opportunity over the next few months to continue to advocate on behalf of our members.

For more information, please contact Austin Cawley at acawley@leadingagepa.org