

FACT SHEET

North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature

2018 Legislative Priorities

Increase HCCBG Funding

The North Carolina Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) is vital to assuring the availability of cost effective home and community-based services to the elderly, the malnourished, homebound, dependent and those who are socially and economically needy. Approximately 10,000 seniors are on the HCCBG waiting list for services and 1.2 million more are expected to turn 60 years of age by the year 2034. This rapidly increasing older adult population of North Carolina places an increased pressure on the service delivery system which is insufficient to meet the current needs of those seeking services. The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature requests the General Assembly increase the Home and Community Care Block Grant funding by \$7 million dollars in recurring funds.

Increase Funding for Senior Centers

Increase funding for Senior Centers by an additional \$300,000 in recurring funds. There are 163 Senior Centers in 97 counties that provide programs and services to enhance the health and wellness of older adults. These services are of significant benefit to help elders remain independent, thus delaying their potential for costlier services or housing options. Senior Center General Purpose money is vital to support critical center operations. To maintain operation, senior centers must leverage resources from a variety of sources that include federal, state and local governments, special events, participant contributions, and grants and volunteer hours. Funding for senior centers has not met the needs of the increasing aging baby boomer's generation who now constitute more than two-thirds of the 50 plus population. It is recommended that the General Assembly increase funding for Senior Centers to continue to meet the vital needs of North Carolina's growing population of older adults.

Sustain and Expand Project C.A.R.E.

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternative to Running on Empty) was designed and tested in North Carolina. It has become a national best practice model for providing respite services to family members who are caring at home for a relative with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. The number of North Carolinians affected with these dementias now approximates 160,000, and is expected to exceed 210,000 by 2025. North Carolina must develop methods to both encourage and support families to assist their aging family members and relatives to remain at home. Resulting savings in public funds are substantial. We recommend that the General Assembly increase recurring funding for Project C.A.R.E. in 2017-2018 by ten percent annually and thereafter to meet the expected growth, statewide.

Strengthen and Fund North Carolina's Adult Protective Services Program (APS)

North Carolina's APS Program must be strengthened and funded in order to respond to the accelerated growth in the State's aging population, some of whom may be at risk of becoming victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The State of North Carolina has not provided any funding for the APS Program since the 2010-2012 State budget. The only funding for the APS Program is provided by county governments and a decreasing federal Social Services Block Grant. We recommend that the North Carolina General Assembly recognize and value its vulnerable and older citizens by making available \$5 million in recurring funds in the State budget to meet the growing need for APS in North Carolina.

Reestablish the Study Commission on Aging

The General Assembly of the State of North Carolina created The North Carolina Study Commission on Aging in 1987 to study and evaluate the delivery of services to older adults and recommend improvements that would meet their current and future needs. In 2011, this commission was repealed, creating an information gap between the older adults in need of assistance and organizations concerned with meeting those needs. The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature requests the North Carolina General Assembly reestablish the North Carolina Study Commission on Aging.

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The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature was created by the North Carolina General Assembly with the passage of Senate Bill 479 in July of 1993.

The Senior Tar Heel Legislature was created to:

- Provide information to senior citizens on the legislative process and matters being considered by the North Carolina General Assembly.
- Promote citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the North Carolina General Assembly.
- Assess the legislative needs of older citizens by convening a forum modeled after the North Carolina General Assembly.

Each of the 100 North Carolina counties is entitled to one delegate to the Senior Tar Heel Legislature. Most counties also have an alternate delegate. Delegates and alternates must be age 60 or older. The North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services provides staff support for the Senior Tar Heel Legislature in cooperation with the 16 Area Agencies on Aging, which are responsible for conducting the selection of delegates and alternates.

Mary Edwards of the Division of Aging and Adult Services is the principal staff aide and can be contacted at Mary.Edwards@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-855-3437.

We can be found on the web at: <http://www.ncsthl.org/> and on Facebook (North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature).

For more information about the North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature, please contact your county's Delegate or Alternate or the following members:

Speaker

Dwight Cartner
Davidson County
118 Avondale Drive
Lexington, NC 27295

Deputy Speaker Pro Tempore

Rev. David Boone
Pasquotank County
901 Cedar Point Circle
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Speaker Pro Tempore

Norma Duncan
Mitchell County
59 Chestnut Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Secretary

Annette Meyers
Granville County
P.O. Box 461
Oxford, NC 27565