

Proposed Dementia Care Specialist Letter

The Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Board of Directors has serious concerns regarding the elimination of funds for Dementia Care Specialists (DCS) in the proposed 2018-2019 state budget. Dane County has employed a Dementia Care Specialist since 2014 who has been an asset and whose services must be continued.

More than 7,000 people with dementia live in Dane County, and there are 67,000 caregivers age 65 and older. In 2016, the Dane County Dementia Care Specialist had 445 contacts and made 681 referrals for services to such agencies as the Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin. Involved is working in partnership with Dane County's Elder Abuse and Adult Protective Services to help empower families to keep them out of the court system--benefiting both the families and the County. In addition, Dane's DCS had 277 outreach events attended by 4,800 participants. The DCS worked with 16 communities and helped 232 businesses and organizations become Dementia Friendly certified. Dane County has seen the benefit of Stoughton Hospital being the first Dementia Friendly Hospital. The DCS also introduced a "shop in their shoes" experience for Walgreens that may be expanded nation-wide.

Services provided through the program are wide-spread and vital to caregivers and those living with dementia. Dementia Care Specialist funding must be included in the 2018-2019 state budget to enable continued services to affected senior adults. Your endorsement and support will enable a program demonstrated to be valuable as a service and a device to strengthen public education about dementia.

Sincerely,

Bill Clausius, Chair

Proposed RSVP Letter

The Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Board of Directors has serious concerns regarding possible elimination of the currently-effective and necessary Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Closing CNCS would mean the loss of Senior Corps: Retired Seniors and Volunteers Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), and the Senior Companion Program (SCP). Despite the many problems that will result from elimination of this program, focus is placed on those having major negative impact on the community.

1. A primary argument for retaining CNCS may be highlighted through review of numbers. Nationwide, 245,000 Senior Corps older adult volunteers serve 74.6 million hours. That reflects helping 840,000 frail elderly and veterans with independent living services, tutoring and mentoring 267,000 children, as well as assisting families and individuals in need. Americans depend on such assistance. Also, older adults will continue to receive support through these important programs to help them remain active and healthier through their volunteer service. The question that must be answered is: "Will communities nationwide be able to replace the enumerable hours of service provided by volunteers in the CNCS program?"
2. In Dane County, RSVP and FGP are the cornerstone of providing services for the community. It is impossible to calculate the total impact of this loss of service if eliminated. Annually, more than 1,600 RSVP and FGP volunteers give 180,000 hours of their time. They tutor and mentor children in more than 200 classrooms. They provide 8,500 rides and deliver over 84,000 meals for seniors and veterans. Last year, they made 10,000 handmade items (mittens, hats, scarves, etc.) for infants, children, and families. They provided information to more than 700 older adults on crime prevention and public safety through TRIAD, local programs combining efforts of RSVP, law enforcement and fire fighters, and senior volunteers. Finally, they have helped 70 nonprofit/public agencies extend their services to the far corners of Dane County.

By providing rides and delivering meals, RSVP enables 2,000 seniors and veterans to stay independent and in their apartments or own homes. If an assumption is made that RSVP volunteers help at least 20 (1%) of these seniors and veterans to delay nursing home care for one year (average cost in Wisconsin being \$93,804), the value of this service approaches two million dollars.

Appreciation for just one of the programs funded through the Corporation for National and Community Services is epitomized by comments from two RSVP passengers from Dane County:

"I could not afford taxi service to Madison where my primary doctor and specialists that I see have their offices. If not for RSVP, I would have to move to a facility in Madison."

"I am no longer able to drive my car and I am able to see my doctors with this arrangement. Thank you, thank you!"

On behalf of the more than 82,000 older Dane County adults, the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Board of Directors asks you to be extra cautious when voting for President Trump's FY 2018 Budget Blueprint and to keep in mind the potential for serious consequences to the people of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Bill Clausius, Chair