



To: House and Senate Committees on Appropriations  
From: Colin Hilliard (chilliard@aarp.org | 802-238-5693)  
Advocacy Director, AARP Vermont  
Re: Joint Public Hearing on the Governor's Recommended FY 2026 Budget  
Date: February 20, 2025

My name is Colin Hilliard, Advocacy Director of AARP Vermont. On behalf of AARP's 110,000 members in Vermont, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify.

AARP requests a \$235,000 appropriation for HomeShare Vermont to expand its service area to include Orleans, Essex, Caledonia, Windham County, and the remaining towns in Windsor County. Homeshare's expansion plan involves sharing case managers from local partner organizations, thus maximizing the value of these funds.

Expanding HomeShare's services statewide has been suggested by lawmakers for many years and has been identified as a strategy for supportive living in Vermont's Age Strong Plan. Simply put, funding this expansion is an efficient and affordable way to tackle both the housing crisis and ensure that older Vermonters have more choices in living an independent and vibrant life.

Second, AARP requests \$125,000 in general fund appropriation to establish the Age Strong Commission in order to advance, monitor, and administer the 10-year Multi-Sector Plan on Aging and the state plan on aging by advising and educating policymakers and the administration; in addition to advancing a culture of healthy, active aging through education and outreach.

Lastly, AARP is a member of the [Long-Term Care Crisis Coalition](#), and we want to highlight the coalition's two requests in the SFY26 Budget.

1. A full implementation of the increases for home based Choices for Care services and Enhanced Residential Care as described in the 2023 DIVHA rate study – a total General Fund investment of \$6m.
2. An inflationary adjustment of 4% to all long-term care reimbursement rates in the FY26 budget.

Long-Term care is a critical service for our most vulnerable and enables Vermonters to age with dignity in our communities. Without budgetary support, we could see further reductions in services, or even the closure of providers. Vermonters deserve a robust, sustainable long-term care system that can meet their changing needs as they age.