



Re: SSBG Plan Comments  
Michael Leighs  
Deputy Secretary for Opportunity and Well-Being  
2420 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-2420

Comments from North Carolina Coalition on Aging on Social Services Block Grant Intended Use  
Plan 2026-2027  
June 24, 2026

Thank you for allowing public comments on the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Intended Use Plan 2026-2027. The North Carolina Coalition on Aging (NCCOA) welcomes this opportunity to provide these comments. NCCOA is a dynamic group of provider, advocacy, and consumer organizations/agencies plus individual supporters who work collaboratively to give voice to issues that affect older North Carolinians. The mission of NCCOA is to improve the quality of life for older adults through collective advocacy, education, and public policy work.

As reported in the [2024 Progress Report on NC's Multisector Plan on Aging](#), North Carolina's 65+ population is projected to increase from 1.9 million people in 2022 to 2.8 million in 2042 – a 48% increase. During this same period, the 85+ segment of the population, those most likely to need care and support, will grow by a dramatic 114%. North Carolina must invest in services and supports for older adults and their families. The programs provided to older adults under the SSBG should invest in services needed now while paving the way for the future increase in older adults who will rely on these services in order to remain in their homes and communities.

Funding is needed for services that help meet critical needs and enable older adults in our state, regardless of where they live, to have access to a continuum of home- and community-based services and long-term services and support. Many counties have gaps in services, cannot provide individuals with the level of services needed, or have waiting lists for many programs; leaving older adults with unmet needs. These problems are becoming more acute with funding challenges as costs continue to rise.

The SSBG plays a key role in providing funding that addresses some of the most critical needs that older adults face. Many of these services are highlighted throughout All Ages, All Stages NC (North Carolina's ten-year multisector plan on aging) including housing, adult day services, and adult protective services.

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NCCOA supports increased funding and program support from the SSBG in several areas.

#### 5. Program Operations – Day Care Services – Adults

Adult Day Services provide a safe, nurturing place for older adults in need of care and supervision to thrive during the day. Provider rates for these services have remained stagnant for many years and more funding is needed to reimburse providers for the services they provide. Across the state, Adult Day Services programs are closing because the rates are too low. Without these programs, family caregivers, including those who are employed, may not be able to continue to care for their relatives in the home and may need to resort to out-of-home placement for their loved one.

#### 13. Program Operations – Home Based Services

Home care providers participating in the SSBG face significant hurdles including static funding that doesn't keep up with inflation and workforce shortages that inadequately address the need for care. Fixed funding fails to keep pace with inflation, making it difficult to cover rising costs. Agencies struggle with high turnover and the inability to recruit qualified direct care workers and nurses due to low wages and competitive facility-based settings, and non-health sector pay. North Carolina has been working to address the critical workforce shortage with the establishment of the NC Center on the Workforce for Health and through All Ages, All Stages NC.

#### 14. Program Operations – Home Delivered Meals

The wait list for home delivered meals in counties across the state continues to grow and the price of food and other program costs is increasing. Further, fuel prices have increased and place a strain on volunteers. More funding is needed to support this important service to help people stay in their homes. Access to healthy meals is a social determinant of health and provides positive health outcomes. Further, home delivered meals are a cost-effective housing support and having access to regular hot meals greatly reduces fall risks.

#### 15. Program Operations – Housing Services

Continuing support is needed to enable older adults to age in place in their homes and communities. Increased funding for home repairs and modifications such as adding a ramp for wheelchair access and installing grab bars in a shower often are key to someone being able to stay at home. Ensuring that services are available to help older adults become aware of and access housing services so they do not lose their homes is also critical.

#### 21. Program Operations – Protective Services for Adults

Many counties in our state do not have adequate funding to support the adult protective services (APS) program. More funding is needed to ensure county departments of social services have the necessary resources to deliver effective APS, including emergency services. Funding is limited and distributed across various services. As there is no direct state funding for

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APS, once federal funding is distributed, counties fund the rest, potentially limiting services to individuals in various counties despite a need. Federal SSBG currently pays 16% and counties provide funding for 65% of APS support. According to the [State Adult Services Annual Report](#), in 2024-2025, 67 counties had an increase in APS evaluations; reflecting an increase in service needs. Further, in 2023-2024, 18,621 APS evaluations were completed and in 2024-2025, that number increased to 21,011 APS evaluations.

#### 25. Program Operations – Special Services for Persons with Developmental or Physical Disabilities

Our state has many older caregivers who have been the long-time caregivers of their developmentally disabled children. As these caregivers and their children grow older, both the children and the caregivers have increasing needs. Supporting efforts to address these on-going needs is of utmost importance.

Lastly, it is imperative to ensure there is funding for guardianship services offered through adult services which are not specifically noted in the plan. This funding is needed at the county level and in state supported contracts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Plan. We welcome opportunities to collaborate to ensure services can continue when funding falls short to maintain programs and services that serve older adults and prevent unmet needs.

Kay Castillo  
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North Carolina Coalition on Aging

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