

Northwest Senior Services Board
November 18, 2025
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting

In-Person
Mount Vernon NWRC Office
301 Valley Mall Way, Suite 100
Mount Vernon, WA
(360) 676-6749

[Join Teams Meeting](#)
Meeting ID: 290 383 396 569 0
Passcode: eP9rs2gG

AGENDA

Agenda Topic	Action Required	Time
1. Call to Order Chair- • Introduction of guests • Roll call • Review of September minutes • Announcements • Public Comment	Motion	1:00 pm – 1:05 pm
2. Nominations and Vote for Chair/Vice Chair	Motion	1:05 pm – 1:20 pm
3. 2026 Meeting Dates	Information	1:20 pm – 1:25 pm
4. Updates from our Committees a. Save Our Selves b. Social Isolation c. Legislative Advocacy d. Outreach	Information	1:25 pm – 1:55 pm
5. Break		1:55 pm – 2:05 pm
6. Legislative Advocacy Planning	Discussion	2:05 pm – 2:20 pm
7. Executive Director Updates	Information	2:20 pm – 2:40 pm
8. WA Cares Presentation Presented by Mariah Davis	Information	2:40 pm – 3:20 pm
9. Updates from our Communities	Information	3:20 pm - 3:30 pm
10. Adjourn	Motion	

****Upcoming 2026 Meetings:**

- **January 13th, 2026**
- **March 10th, 2026**
- **May 12th, 2026**
- **July 14th, 2026**
- **September 8th, 2026**
- **November 10th, 2026**

Anyone needing special accommodations to participate in a meeting should contact NWRC at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

For more information, please contact the NWRC office at (360) 676-6749 600 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225.
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Northwest Senior Services Board Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2025

Members Present In-person, via teams, or Telephonically: Lucretia Devine, George Edward, Shirley Bennett, Carl Bender, Mary Kanter, Stephen Schubert, Gail Leschine-Seitz, Laura Castro-Benzin, Jennifer Lautenbach

Members Absent: Mike Shaw, Morgan Hendricks, Jodi Sipes, Jana Finkbonner, Georgiann Dustin

Staff Present:

Amanda McDade, Katie Durbec, Bethany Chamberlin

Guest: None

Quorum at 1:02 PM

Review of the July 22nd, 2025, Minutes: Motion made by Carl Bender to accept the minutes from the July 22, 2025 meeting and seconded by Shirley Bennett . **Motion Passed.**

Announcements: None.

Public Comment: None.

Intro of our New Board Member: The newest member of the NWSSB, Laura Castro-Benzin, provided an overview of her professional background and why she decided to pursue joining the Advisory Board. Amanda McDade shared a PowerPoint presentation covering NWRC core services and Medicaid funding to welcome Laura.

Committee Updates

Social Isolation – This committee is in a transitional space as Marshall Gartenlaub has stepped off the board. There is a pilot project to be discussed later in the agenda to address the social isolation. Meetings are still occurring outside of regular board meetings.

Save Ourselves –Stephen Shubert and Lucretia Devine have joined Village to Village and they are circulating a questionnaire to gauge interest in the program. They will reconvene in October to review the responses and will be looking for contractors/partners to work with for landscaping, home repair, etc. There is an idea to utilize high school students who need community service hours. There is an Aging In Place seminar in October through Dorot.

Advocacy – Legislative advocacy requests will continue to go out to the board members from Bethany and she encourages the board to keep making those calls because they do have an impact. Legislative session is coming up and momentum will be picking up. Health Homes Care Coordination will be a big priority in our advocacy efforts.

Outreach – There was discussion around NWRC’s relationship to community senior centers. NWRC does not directly fund senior centers but does contract service providers who go to senior centers, primarily for the nutrition providers who provide meals at the centers. Additionally, NWRC’s ADR staff travel to senior centers to connect seniors with services.

Board Member Membership Renewals

Some 3-year terms have expired on the NWSSB and Katie Durbec polled the board members with expired terms to learn who is interested in renewing for another term. Re-appointment letters will be requested from the counties of residence for those interested.

Executive Director Updates

NWRC Executive Director Amanda McDade provided:

- An update on nutrition dollars, given the statement from Skagit County about Meals on Wheels. Skagit County contributes a large sum of county dollars to nutrition and it is not sustainable in the long-term. They have no plans to cut these programs as of this date. NWRC passes all dollars that flow through the agency for nutrition to the programs and does not have control over the amount NWRC receives, as it is up to the legislature
- An update on NWRC’s budget - Process has been begun for 2026 and meetings have started with each department to determine any budget changes for the upcoming year. NWRC tends to budget conservatively for safety purposes and the governing board will approve the final budget at the December 2025 board meeting.

Intervention and Loneliness Project

- Bethany Chamberlin and Amanda McDade are working on a project to combat social isolation and utilize NWRC employees who would like to volunteer an hour of their time each month to make calls to seniors living by themselves or are lacking social contact. Amanda and Bethany will pilot the program with weekly calls to 5-10 seniors to see if there is an impact. There are ideas to connect with EMS to get names of people living on their own who call 911 often. This proposed project received support from multiple board members. An additional idea was proposed for an organized weekly zoom meeting amongst seniors.

State Council on Aging Update

- Bethany Chamberlin shared a save-the-date for the virtual fall conference put on by W4A and the State Council on Aging. There will be speakers who will summarize present events and legislative updates. It launches us into the legislative session and our Winter senior advocacy days. Carl Bender has been to several and mentioned it’s a great place to meet people from other senior centers and share ideas. This will take place on October 15th from 10am-2pm.

Updates from our Communities:

- There is a caregiver conference in Whatcom County on 10/10 at the Sheridan hotel from 10am-4pm. \$80 to attend

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made by Shirley Bennett and seconded by George Edward. **Motion passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM

Katie Durbec, Agency Administrator

Reviewed and approved by the Northwest Senior Services Board at the November 18, 2025, meeting.

Georgiann Dustin, NWSSB, Chair

Affordable long-term care coverage for Washington workers

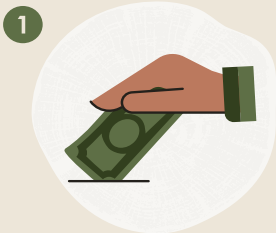


The WA Cares Fund is an earned benefit designed to help you age independently in your own home. Most of us will need long-term care to help with daily activities like bathing, eating, moving around and managing medication, but won't have a way to pay for it.

Medicare and health insurance don't cover long-term care, and Medicaid typically requires you to spend down your life savings to \$2,000 to qualify. WA Cares provides critical resources to give you more choices during one of life's most vulnerable phases.

How it works

Automatically contribute



Contribute 0.58% of your paycheck during your working years.

Qualify for benefits



Apply to access benefits if you've met contribution and care needs requirements.

Use your benefits



Choose how to use your \$36,500 lifetime benefit amount (grows with inflation).

Qualifying for benefits

You must meet two requirements to access benefits.

Starting July 2026, you can move out of state and continue participating to receive benefits when you need care.

1. Contribution requirement

You can meet the contribution requirement through one of three pathways.

- **Permanent pathway:** Earn the full benefit amount by contributing for at least 10 years.*
- **Temporary pathway:** Earn the full benefit amount if you have contributed for at least three of the last six years* at the time you apply for benefits.
- **Transition pathway:** If you were born before 1968, earn lifetime access to 10% of the full benefit amount for each year* you contribute.

*We will count each calendar year you work at least 500 hours.

2. Care needs requirement

We must determine that you need help with three or more activities of daily living and will continue to need help for at least 90 days. The activities we assess are:

- Bathing
- Bed mobility
- Transferring (getting in or out of a chair)
- Toileting
- Mobility (walking or moving around)
- Eating
- Managing medications

We'll count any activities that you need supervision (like monitoring, cueing or set-up assistance) to complete.

Applying for benefits

To start the process, you (or someone helping you) can create an online account by visiting wacaresfund.wa.gov/apply.

Once we confirm you've met the contribution requirement, you'll schedule an in-person appointment to talk about your care needs. Then we'll let you know if you're approved to use benefits.

You can create your online account starting in April 2026, apply for benefits starting in mid-May and use your benefits in July.

Visit wacaresfund.wa.gov/benefits to learn more.

Benefits become
available in **July 2026**.

Using your benefits

You can use your benefits to receive any covered services and supports from a WA Cares provider.

To help you stay at home

- In-home care from an individual provider or home care agency
- Home safety evaluations
- Home modifications
- Home-delivered meals
- Transportation
- Adaptive equipment and technology
- Personal emergency response systems
- Housework and yardwork

To support your family caregiver

- Paid care from a loved one, including your spouse
- Respite care in your home or a facility
- Education and consultation to help manage your care
- Dementia and behavioral supports
- Care transition coordination to support you when leaving a facility or hospital

In your community

- Adult family home
- Adult day services

In a facility

- Assisted living services, including memory care services
- Nursing home

Some services may not be available statewide.

Get support

You can contact us **Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** (closed state holidays). For the most up-to-date information visit wacaresfund.wa.gov.

Phone

844-CARE4WA (844-227-3492)

Email or chat

Visit wacaresfund.wa.gov/contact

For TTY/ TDD or Washington Relay Service, dial 711. Language assistance is available by phone or email.