



# THE ADVOCATE

June 2019

## Senate Proposes Increase while House Proposes Cut to Specialized Services Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities

The Specialized Services program provides operating assistance to private, nonprofit and public agencies providing transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities. Funds are allocated to public transit authorities, which may subcontract with local service agencies to provide gap filling small bus or volunteer driver transportation programs in accordance with an approved Local Coordination Plan. These programs usually offer door-to-door or door-through-door on demand transportation services. There were over 1.2 million Specialized Service passengers in Michigan last year, three fourths of whom had a disability. 400,000 of these rides were provided by 39 local SMART partners, mostly nonprofits local governments and senior centers.

\$3.8 million in Specialized Services operating assistance grants were allocated in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, an increase of only \$200,000 over the \$3.6 million allocated in 1999. The Governor and Senate proposed FY 2020 budgets include a \$1 million of increase be allocated for Specialized Services. The increased funding would be distributed proportionately across the state and be used to provide for a cost of living increase and in many regions, allowing additional busses to be put on the road to meet growing transportation demand among seniors and individuals with a disability. The House transportation budget proposed cutting \$2.7 million from the Specialized Services program, a 70% reduction, but would force programs to compete with all other transit programs for a share of funding from a new Incentive Challenge Fund.

**The AAA 1-B opposes the House \$2.7 million cut and supports the \$1 million increase approved by the Senate for Specialized Services Transportation.** Region 1-B Specialized Services providers include:

- |  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| AATA A Ride                                  | City of Southfield                   | Manchester Area Senior Citizens Council     |
| Birmingham Area Seniors                      | City of St. Clair Shores             | Milan Seniors for Healthy Living            |
| Brighton Community Education                 | City of Warren Parks & Recreation    | Monroe Co. Opportunity Program              |
| Catholic Charities of SE MI (Macomb/Oakland) | Community Mental Health (Livingston) | North Oakland Transportation Authority      |
| Charter Township of Brandon                  | Hartland Senior Center               | Northfield Human Services                   |
| Charter Township of Clinton                  | Independence Township                | Older Persons Commission                    |
| Charter Township of Harrison                 | Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers      | Richmond Lennox EMS                         |
| Charter Township of Highland                 | Jewish Family Services (Washtenaw)   | STAR Transportation                         |
| Charter Township of White Lake               | JVS Human Services                   | Troy Medi-Go Plus                           |
| City of Berkley                              | Livingston Co. Catholic Charities    | Village of Holly                            |
| City of Farmington Hills                     | Livingston Co. Special Ministries    | Waterford Senior Center                     |
| City of Ferndale                             | Macomb Community Action              | Western Washtenaw Area Value Express (WAVE) |
| City of Mt. Clemens                          |                                      |   |
| City of Northville                           |                                      |   |



The Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) is a nonprofit agency serving the needs of older adults in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties.

Contact Katie Wendel, (248) 262-9232 or by e-mail at [kwendel@aaa1b.org](mailto:kwendel@aaa1b.org) to join the Senior Advocacy Network or receive copies of AAA 1-B reports referenced in The Advocate.