

The below letter to the editor was published on August 4, 2024 but is now only available from the Morning Call to subscribers.

<https://www.mcall.com/2024/08/04/letters-services-for-lehigh-valley-seniors-at-risk-without-funds/>

By **Ann Lowy** | [alowy@mcall.com](mailto:alowy@mcall.com) | The Morning Call

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### **Services for seniors at risk without funds**

A significant issue has emerged from the recently passed Pennsylvania budget that threatens essential services for seniors in Lehigh County. Key services such as home-delivered meals, personal care assistance and senior center operations are at risk due to a budget shortfall. The Department of Aging had requested a 5% increase of \$15.2 million from the Pennsylvania Lottery Fund to support these services and address critical responsibilities, including investigating neglect, abuse and financial exploitation.

Without this additional funding, Pennsylvania's Area Agencies on Aging, including our Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services, will face a deficit of approximately \$404,000 — 5.5% of our budget. This shortfall forces us to contemplate creating waiting lists and potentially reducing or eliminating vital services such as community centers, home-delivered meals, transportation and home care aides. This comes at a time when our senior population is growing rapidly.

We urge our state representatives and senators to act swiftly by passing a supplemental budget bill in September to allocate the requested \$15.2 million from the lottery fund to the Department of Aging. This action is crucial for sustaining the quality of life for our seniors.

### **JR Reed**

*The writer is the executive director of Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services and also the board president of Pennsylvania Association of Area Agency on Aging.*