

# **AARP: Thematic outreach kits for Dane County's long-term care facilities will be updated with AARP WI grant**

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**MADISON, WI** - A proposal by the Dane County Library Service to update thematic outreach kits that are distributed to dozens of nursing homes, senior centers, adult day cares, assisted living and other senior living facilities throughout Dane County has been selected to receive an AARP Wisconsin "Small Dollar, Big Impact" grant.

The \$1,000 grant will allow the library service to update at least 10 of their outreach kits to include new thematically-appropriate books, movies and music. The kits will also receive updated materials to touch and discuss, says Mary Driscoll, Outreach Librarian for the Dane County Library Service, who submitted the grant proposal to AARP Wisconsin.

"Dane County Library Service is thrilled to be the recipient of the generous Small Dollar, Big Impact grant from AARP Wisconsin to freshen up our thematic outreach kits," Driscoll said. "The kits receive a lot of love and are always in need of being spruced up. The grant will help us keep our kits in good repair so we can provide exciting materials that help activity directors spark conversation and memories with their residents."

For example, Driscoll said, "Our Cookery Kit has vintage aprons, milk bottles and kitchen gadgets. We often purchase kit materials from antique stores, which give the materials a feeling of authenticity and helps spark memories. The books that are purchased are often large format coffee table-style books which have plenty of pictures for residents to discuss and enjoy."

Each month the county library service provides free materials such as books, DVDs, audiobooks, and these thematic outreach kits to approximately 80 long-term care facilities on a rotating basis.

“Activities directors at these facilities, who often have limited programming budgets, do an amazing job providing enrichment for their residents. We’re happy to do anything we can to make their jobs a little easier and help brighten the lives of the residents,” Driscoll said.

The more funds received by the county library service, the more kits they can update with new materials. “The (kits) are sort of like a whole program in a bag. The residents just love them,” she said.

Small Dollar, Big Impact grants are being awarded once a month throughout the year to projects across Wisconsin that are designed to improve communities and make them better places for everyone to live, work and play as they age. Judges selected this project for a grant after reviewing dozens of proposals submitted from all over the state.

“This project fits perfectly with the spirit and intent of the grant program, said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson. “Our goal is to support communities as they make positive changes that inspire long-term progress on livable issues. This project hits that nail right on the head.”

AARP Wisconsin’s launched its “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant program in 2020 and is now in its second year of helping proposed projects move forward in rural and urban parts of the state. All projects are expected to be completed within 60 days of the winner announcement.

“These grants are exactly what the name describes – short-term, low-cost solutions that could have remarkable impacts on the shaping of neighborhoods and cities,” said Darrin Wasniewski, Associate State Director of Community Outreach for AARP Wisconsin.

“There are so many great ideas and proposals for making life better in communities across Wisconsin. We know how impactful \$1,000 can be. This is our way of extending some seed money to get these projects off the ground.”

The grant program is open to some nonprofits and government entities. For more



information on the program, visit [www.aarp.org/WIsdbi](http://www.aarp.org/WIsdbi)