

2023 Benefit Specialist Programs Fact Sheet

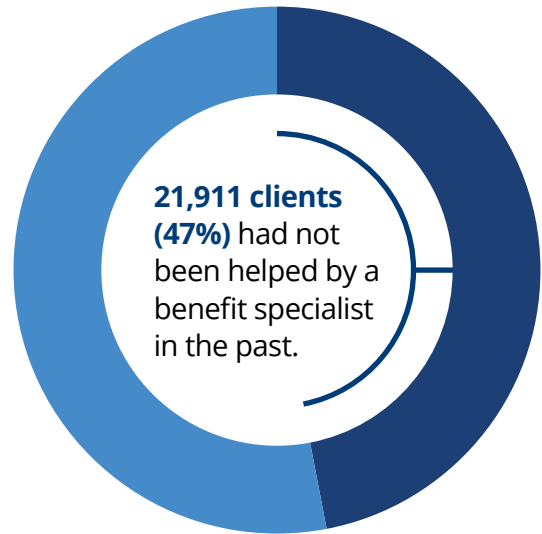
There are **186** benefit specialists in Wisconsin.

88 disability benefit specialists (DBS), serving adults 18–59 who are living with disabilities

95 elder benefit specialists (EBS), serving people 60 and older

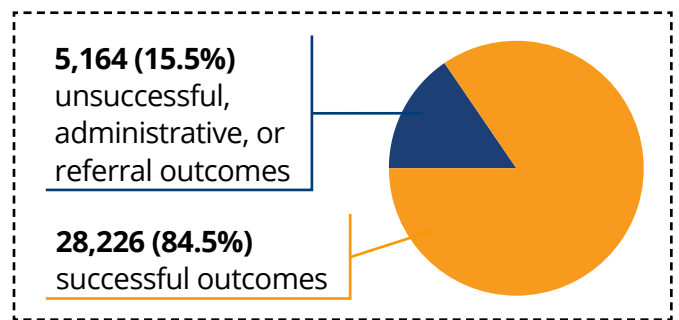
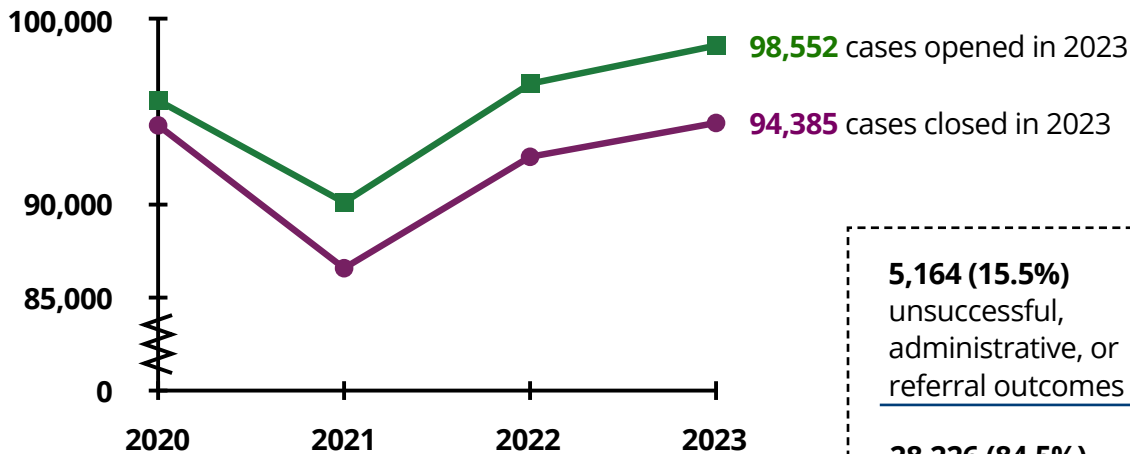
3 dual DBS/EBS, serving both older adults and adults with disabilities

Benefit specialists served **46,635** clients in 2023.



Cases opened and closed continue to rise.

Benefit specialists are helping more people learn about, get, and keep benefits each year.



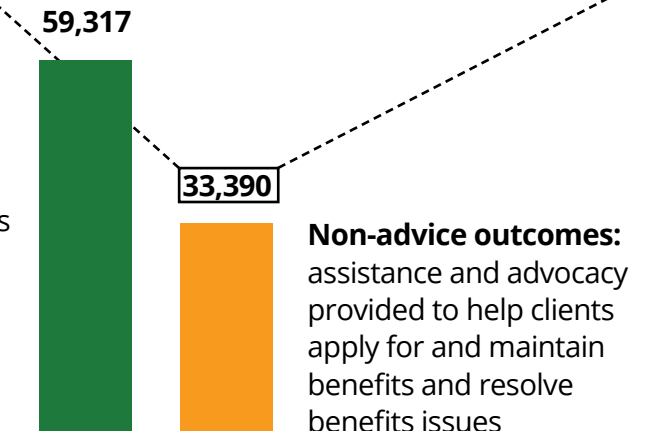
Benefit specialists are accomplished advocates.

In 2023, **84.5%** of non-advice cases resulted in successful advocacy outcomes for clients.

Monetary impact (MI): the value of services and benefits that clients receive as a result of successful advocacy from benefit specialists

Total 2023 MI	\$274,053,233
Avg. MI per benefit specialist	\$1,473,404
Avg. MI per successful outcome	\$9,709

Advice-only outcomes: information provided about benefits in a single encounter or with brief follow-up



Benefit specialist success stories

Benefit specialists help people navigate complex systems and bureaucratic processes. Educating individuals to understand their benefits can empower them to maximize their independence and advocate for their rights and their health. The following examples illustrate how benefit specialists' work changes lives and systems!

Advocating for disability benefits

A customer had a catastrophic fall, which caused life-changing injuries and loss of mobility in their limbs. Due to these injuries, the customer was no longer able to continue in their career. The customer applied for disability benefits but was denied. Through the advocacy of the benefit specialist, the Social Security Administration reversed their decision and approved the customer's Supplemental Security Income benefit, providing the customer with a monthly income and health care coverage through Medicaid.

Providing options for long-term care

A benefit specialist referred their customer to an

ADRC specialist to discuss the customer's long-term care options. Through the options counseling process, the customer decided that enrolling in a long-term care program would best meet their needs, and they enrolled in the Family Care program. The customer's managed care organization arranged to make modifications to the customer's home to make the home accessible, which allowed the customer to remain active in their community.

Achieving a successful appeal

A customer had developed some severe and unpleasant side effects from the medications used to treat cancer, including painful urination and painful walking. The customer worked with their doctors for over a year, trying alternative, non-surgical methods to treat the problems, but was unsuccessful. Ultimately, their doctors determined surgery was necessary to correct the problem. When the surgical procedure was denied by their insurance, a benefit specialist helped the customer achieve a successful appeal to have the surgical procedure covered.

Other 2023 advocacy efforts and impacts

- DBS program attorney Eva Shiffrin was interviewed by National Public Radio regarding overpayment issues.
- EBS program attorney Christine Huberty testified in two federal congressional hearings:
 - Examining Health Care Denials and Delays in Medicare Advantage
 - Avoiding a Cautionary Tale: Policy Considerations for Artificial Intelligence in Health Care
- The EBS program manager, Michelle Grochocinski, was elected to the National State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Steering Committee, which advocates nationally for improved Medicare beneficiary protections and SHIP support.
- The state submitted comments on proposed federal rules that would impact benefit programs and health insurance.
- The Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources (BADR) collaborated with the Department of Corrections to create and distribute a resource to Medicare-eligible Wisconsin residents being released from incarceration: [At-A-Glance Guide to Medicare for People in Wisconsin who are Incarcerated \(P-03179B\)](#).
- BADR released an in-depth report that highlighted the achievements and impacts of all ADRC and Tribal nation aging and disability programs in Wisconsin in 2023: [The Impacts of ADRC and Tribal Programs in Wisconsin \(P-00251\)](#).

