Summer recess for Congress is almost here but it’s not just the sweltering heat waves that’s causing them to sweat! There is an intense countdown to move FY 2022 funding measures through before Congress takes a break—which means markups are being made and votes are being voiced on critical funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs. In other words, n4a needs your boots-on-the-ground expertise and constituent voices to call upon your elected officials and get long-overdue appropriate funding levels for OAA programs and services!

Earlier this spring, n4a sent our annual appropriations request letter to Congress and recently sent another letter to the Hill outlining our support of the President’s budget (which aligns closely with n4a asks) and re-emphasized our FY 2022 OAA requests. But that’s not enough: we need members of Congress to hear directly from their constituents—and that’s where you come in.

Inspired by bold increases in the President’s budget and in tune to decades of aging advocates’ pleas, last week the House Appropriations Committee approved a Labor-HHS-Education spending measure with game-changing OAA levels. For more insider baseball and specific funding details, view n4a’s recent Legislative Update! The spending measure, which almost mirrors n4a’s appropriations requests, will now move to a full House vote alongside a number of other spending bills (likely next week).

Our collective advocacy must now also turn to the Senate to ensure that the Senate appropriations bill reflects n4a’s appropriations requests or, at a minimum, receive the same level of support as the House measure! This means advocates need to encourage Senate appropriators to adopt the House-passed increases for critical aging supports! It’s vital that your agency and your grassroots advocates connect with federal lawmakers NOW about the importance of adopting funding increases for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SENATORS and ask for their support!
Why We Need Your Advocacy

To ensure your agency can continue to provide older adults and their caregivers critical access to services past the pandemic while accommodating the demographic growth that is happening everywhere in the U.S., n4a needs your voice to push Senators and Representatives to support the bold investments in OAA programs and services outlined in the House Appropriations Bill.

n4a’s appropriations asks specifically prioritized four subtitles of the Act for major increases, including doubling Titles III B (Supportive Services), Title VI (Native American aging programs) and III D (evidence-based health and wellness) and increasing III E (National Family Caregiver Support Program) by 50 percent. This is the level of investment these programs should have had before COVID-19 and reflects what these programs will absolutely need after it! A decade of cuts followed by austerity has led to significant erosion in the ability of the Aging Network to now meet the current and coming need.

We need all AAAs, Title VI Native American Aging Programs and all their local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding. We must ensure that all members of Congress know that an increased-by-COVID client base and demographic expansions coupled with a previous decade of stagnant funding puts the health, well-being and independence of their older constituents at risk. While COVID-relief funding is currently allowing the Aging Network to meet this enhanced need, that funding will go away—we need annual appropriations that reflect the ONGOING and GROWING need in your communities as our nation ages.

Take Action Today, Tomorrow & Throughout August!

STEP 1: Visit n4a’s FY 2022 OAA Appropriations Advocacy Toolkit to assist your efforts. Our resources include everything you need to take action:
- Grassroots template letters (AAA and VI versions);
- Current appropriations chart;
- n4a appropriations request letter to Congress; and
- FY 2021 Policy Priorities.
It is important that you take the time to localize what this funding means for the older adults and caregivers in your community, Tribe or state.

STEP 2: Call your lawmakers. Ask your members of Congress for their support and be sure to share a local story about the importance of funding for OAA in your community! The Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121) can connect you to your lawmakers’ DC offices.

STEP 3: Put your agency on record. Send an updated letter via email to your Senators this week. Use our templates (AAA / Title VI) but customize to your agency/community. Find contact information on your Senators’ websites: www.senate.gov.

STEP 4: Make Your Support for OAA Funding Public. Attend any events/town halls (virtual or in-person) your Senators and Representatives are hosting during the summer recess and raise OAA funding during the Q&A! You can also enlist fellow advocates! Find out whether any of your agency’s supporters know the Members of Congress serving your
community or if they will be seeing them at any virtual events. If so, ask that they put in a good word for OAA funding and its impact in your community.

**STEP 5: Initiate a Virtual Visit.** Members of Congress will be back in their states and districts in August, so get on their local calendars NOW! Individual site visits, even if virtual, are also a great opportunity to educate your elected officials about the critical services you provide to their constituents. All you have to do is ask! (Tip: Put the request in writing. Call or email the DC office to ensure your request gets to the scheduler.)

**STEP 6: Engage Your Provider Network.** Urge your vendors/providers, advisory board members and other important stakeholders to send their own letters to Congress. Please do all you can to amplify the message and engage others who understand the value of OAA in their community! You’re welcome to forward this Alert to your networks or edit it to be best received by your advocates.

Stay tuned for more updates from n4a and, as always, we thank you for your advocacy!

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If you have questions or concerns about this **Advocacy Alert** or n4a’s policy positions, please contact Monica Billger at mbillger@n4a.org and Amy Gotwals at agotwals@n4a.org.