TEMPLATE Letter to Congress regarding the urgent need for additional emergency Funding for OAA programs as part of next COVID-19 legislation. You can put this on your agency’s letterhead or send via email See n4a’s [2.2.2021 *Advocacy Alert* for more information](https://www.n4a.org/content.asp?admin=Y&contentid=1160).

Dear Representative/Senator [Names]:

I am writing today on behalf of [name of your agency] in [your community], which is funded through the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) to provide vital services and supports that enable older adults and their caregivers to age with health and dignity in their homes. The critical services that we provide to your older constituents have been even more important as we have continued to respond to the needs of older Americans nationwide during the ongoing health and economic crisis.

We are writing to urge national policy leaders to address critical health and aging policy priorities, [which were largely left unaddressed in the COVID-19 relief and omnibus FY 2021 appropriations package](https://www.n4a.org/files/n4a%20EOY%20Aging%20Priorities%20Senate-House%2012.3.2020%20FINAL.pdf) at the end of last year**. Specifically, additional emergency funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs is** [**desperately needed**](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/covid-19-congress-senior-citizen-safety-net-in-tatters_n_5ffe4664c5b656719889fbed) to ensure that we are able to continue providing vital home-delivered meals, in-home services, caregiver assistance, and other community-based supportive services to meet the drastically increasing needs of older and caregiver constituents during this crisis. [Add a short sentence to summarize how needs have increased/changed in your community during the pandemic.]

Vital OAA programs meet the needs of the very people who are at the highest risk of hospitalization or dying from COVID-19. Nationally, of the nearly 450,000 Americans lost to COVID-19, 80 percent were 65 or older. Sixty percent were 75 or older. Furthermore, older Americans who contract the coronavirus have a five to 13 times higher risk of hospitalization and a 90 to 630 times higher risk of death than adults under age 30.

[If it makes sense, add some statistics in from your local community about how COVID has affected older adults in your service area.]

We are very concerned that failure to include funding for OAA services in another bill responding to COVID-19 will harm older Americans who have been hardest hit by this health and economic crisis. As such, we urge lawmakers to include, at a minimum, an additional $1.364 billion provided through the Older Americans Act in the next relief package. This request echoes calls-to-action from our [national membership association](https://www.n4a.org/Files/n4a%20Emergency%20OAA%20Funding%20Priorities%20for%20COVID%20Package%20Senate-House%201.29.2021%20Final%20corrected.pdf) and other [national aging advocacy organizations](https://www.n4a.org/Files/n4a-nanasp-mowa-advancing-states-joint-letter-of-support_January%202021.pdf). Without OAA investments, the next COVID-19 response will leave behind the older adults who desperately need continued support in [your community] and their family caregivers.

**Specifically, we urge you to invest, at a minimum, $1.364 billion for Older Americans Act programs administered by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), including:**

* $750 million for Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services (Title III C)
* $400 million for Supportive Services (Title III B), which includes $200 million for existing services as well as $200 million for vaccination outreach and support to hard-to-reach older adults
* $20 million for Native American Aging Programs (for Nutrition and Supportive Services) (Title VI)
* $44 million for Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Title III D)
* $150 million for Family Caregiver Support (Title III E)

**Importantly, as part of this emergency funding, we urge Congress to boost federal investments in Older Americans Act III B Supportive Services to provide the wrap-around services that will greatly aide our national efforts to vaccinate older adults and family caregivers.** AAAs can provide education on the importance of vaccination, can help older adults navigate the often complicated and non-age-friendly vaccine sign-up systems most of which are online and can provide the direct, supportive services that enable these older adults to keep the vaccination appointment (e.g., transportation, personal assistance, case management). These efforts essentially enhance existing and future massive vaccine deployment efforts by state and local public health agencies, but to do this, the network will require additional federal resources.

[Specifically, add any relevant information about vaccination efforts locally that your agency is helping with]

**We also ask you to prioritize for vaccination the direct care staff that AAAs and other community-based organizations employ.** This workforce will be essential in implementing the hands-on, non-virtual vaccination support (accompanying older adults to vaccine sites, providing transportation, etc.), but only if they themselves are vaccinated.

Collectively, we have the opportunity to turn around our nation’s COVID-19 efforts and provide a unified response that meets the moment and the need. **We also must ensure that [agency name] is able to continue serving high-risk older Americans and caregivers in [community].** Additional emergency investments in the Older Americans Act are desperately needed to ensure that we can continue to address these needs.

Without further federal legislative leadership and action to advance additional supports to vital community-based aging and health care programs, older adults and their caregivers will endure unnecessary, preventable suffering. We implore lawmakers to prioritize older Americans by including funding for these vital aging programs in the next relief legislation. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact [agency contact info] or reach out to our national association at policy@n4a.org.

Sincerely,

[Agency Contact]