



FY 2017 Funding on Deck in Lame Duck Weigh In Now with Members on OAA Funding Priorities!

October 27, 2016

Although the election is in full-swing and the country remains riveted to news of national and state ballot contests, in just a couple of very short weeks Members of Congress will return to DC to finish the most urgent matters that must be done before the end of the year. One major to-do includes figuring out a FY 2017 federal funding strategy by the time the current, temporary funding bill expires on December 9.

With widespread attention devoted to political contests, now is a great time to weigh in with your Members and their staff on substantive policy considerations, including funding for FY 17. n4a recently [sent a letter](#) to Congress regarding our funding priorities for the remainder of the year, and we are asking our members to echo these messages with your Representatives and Senators. We have also drafted [template language](#) to assist your outreach efforts.

Recap of Federal Funding Status

Members of Congress left DC several weeks ago to campaign in their districts and states. However, as our September 30 n4a [Legislative Update](#) details, despite progress made on developing full-year funding proposals for FY 17, lawmakers left town with an agreement on only a short-term plan, known as a continuing resolution (CR), to fund federal agencies and programs at FY 16 levels through December 9. This strategy means that Members simply postponed longer-term funding decisions until they return this fall.

Next steps on FY 2017 appropriations this fall will likely depend on the outcome of the election. If the Administration and/or the Senate change party affiliation, a lame-duck Congress may be reticent to make appropriations decisions before a new Congress and Administration take office in January. If that is the case, we could see either a series of short-term CRs, or a longer-term CR, extend into the first months of the new year. Alternatively, the current Congress may move to finish their work this year and achieve a deal on federal funding for the remainder of FY 2017. Such a deal would probably include a massive funding bill that bundles all agencies into one legislative package—known as an omnibus. Or, Congress could move a series of smaller bills, called minibuses, some of which may be easier to pass.

What We Want Congress to Do

n4a and many other advocates in Washington are advocating for lawmakers to reach a full-year deal for FY 17 appropriations following the election and to reject repeatedly extending FY 16 funding levels through continuing resolutions. Should the House and the Senate pursue this path, they would need to reconcile differences in each chamber's funding bill—including significant differences in funding levels proposed for Older Americans Act and other aging programs.

n4a has been talking to appropriators and staff to encourage them to accept the House-proposed funding levels for OAA programs, which include a number of modest, but important, increases to supportive services, meals and other OAA programs. The House bill also rejects Senate's elimination of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and cut to the OAA Title V SCSEP program.

Local Advocates Must Weigh In!

Action Steps

- **Reach out to your Members of Congress and let them know that your agency wants Congress to reach a full-year, omnibus funding agreement that supports the House-proposed OAA funding levels for FY 17!** Outreach is especially important if your Member serves on the [Senate](#) or [House](#) Appropriations Committee. If your Member of Congress is not on either of those committees, it is still critical to reach out, and ask your Member to contact leadership of those committees! You can use n4a's [template letter](#) to aid your outreach.
- **Tell your Member of Congress why it is important to older adults and caregivers in your community that they reach a full-year funding deal and include the House-proposed OAA levels!** Extending CRs to fund the federal government beyond December means that federal agencies are facing both uncertainty about the length of their funding and that changes and increases proposed by lawmakers in their FY 2017 bills will not be enacted. **Communicate local stories about what stagnant and unpredictable federal funding streams mean to the programs you run and the people you serve.**
- **Engage your community!** Please encourage your providers, advisory boards and partners, and consumers to take action by reaching out to Members in the House and the Senate today! U.S. Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121. Email: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

Note, as you reach out it's also important to PERSONALIZE the emails you send and share anecdotes about the importance of stable, long-term and increased OAA funding in your community.

Thank you for your advocacy on this important issue!

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If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert* or n4a's policy positions, please contact Autumn Campbell at acampbell@n4a.org and Amy Gotwals at agotwals@n4a.org.