

October 3, 2019 Advocacy Alert



Get Loud on OAA Funding! **Connect with Congress Now to Advocate for Increased Funding**

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Members of Congress are in their districts and states and won't return to DC until mid-October, when they will need to tackle decisions about final funding for FY 2020, which began on October 1. Last week, lawmakers avoided a government shutdown when they [passed a short-term extension](#) of current funding, known as a continuing resolution (CR), that keeps federal dollars flowing through November 21.

Senate and House appropriators are using the six-week extension to continue to hash out full-year funding proposals for FY 2020. While there are major differences between the chambers' funding bills, the good news is that the [House passed significant increases for OAA](#) and other important federal aging programs this summer. There is also a chance that if lawmakers can't agree on a final bill, they will continue to pass CRs indefinitely—perhaps even adopting a year-long CR. Those scenarios are far from ideal, as a series of CRs causes uncertainty for states and local agencies, and frozen funding levels do not reflect the growing need for these vital programs and services.

This means that advocates must reach out NOW to push for a full-year FY 2020 funding bill that includes the House-approved increases for OAA and other aging programs. This is the home stretch of FY 2020 advocacy, but perhaps the most critical period yet!

Even if you have already connected with your Members of Congress and asked your grassroots networks to engage as well, it's time to do so again! ***Members of Congress need to hear directly from stakeholders in their state/district and constituents who benefit from the OAA programs and services that you deliver.*** Lawmakers also need to hear from you on the harm that prolonged CRs can cause on a local level.

Take Action

n4a has updated the [Grassroots Advocacy Alert Template](#) included in our [FY 2020 Appropriations Campaign Toolkit](#), which we hope you will use to urge your network of local advocates to take action! Here's your to-do list:

1. **Put your agency on record. Send an updated letter to your Members of Congress.** Use [n4a's updated template letter](#) to send your own messages about the importance of a long-term funding bill and funding increases to your Members of Congress.
2. **Does Your Representative or Senator serve on an Appropriations Committee? Advocacy with Members on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees is especially important.** If your Representative or Senator serves on one of these key committees, your letter should request that they share your messages with their committee leaders. At this point, many funding decisions are being made at a leadership level, and the more they hear from their committee colleagues, the more seriously they will consider these requests.
3. **Engage your grassroots. Using our toolkit** or your own creative ideas, get the word out in your networks that action is needed now! Here are some approaches you could take:
 - **Ask your grassroots to email or post a short note to lawmakers on social media.** Members monitor their email/website traffic for constituent correspondence, and personal messages resonate most. Ask your advocates to share why OAA is important to them.
 - **Ask local advocates to call Congress.** Included in the Template Alert are instructions on calling lawmakers and a short sample script that constituents can use.
 - **Share stories in person.** Encourage your advocacy stakeholders to attend a townhall next week to share the importance of funding for OAA. Or better yet, invite your Member of Congress to come see your agency in action and meet some of their constituents receiving OAA services!

We need all AAAs, Title VI Native American programs and local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding. **We must ensure that all Members of Congress know how important increased, stable, federal funding for OAA is to promote the health, well-being and independence of their older constituents and those who care for them.**

More advocacy resources are available on n4a's [FY 2020 Appropriations Campaign page](#). Thank you for your advocacy on this important issue!

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