How the Government is Funded Next Year Matters;
Tell Your Lawmakers to Support an Omnibus FY 2015 Federal Funding Bill!

December 4, 2014

Congress is wrapping up a short and busy lame-duck session, but before Members head home for the holidays, they will need to address the remainder of FY 2015 federal funding. The current temporary law expires in one week on December 11. While it is fairly clear that lawmakers in both the House and Senate will not entertain the government shutdown antics seen during previous end-of-year debates, what is not clear is how they will fund the government into the new year and the new Congress.

At this point there are several potential strategies that Appropriators in both chambers could take to ensure that federal agencies continue to operate past next week. But, these strategies are not created equal. Congress is debating whether to achieve a FY 2015 funding agreement through either an omnibus, which would combine all appropriations bills into one larger package, or a simple short-term or year-long continuing resolution (CR), which would merely freeze spending for programs at current levels. Additionally, given current political realities, it is possible that a combination of the two strategies—or a “Cromnibus” bill—may emerge. Only in Washington…

In order to advance funding priorities to support OAA and other discretionary programs that support aging in place, it is imperative that lawmakers pass an omnibus appropriations bill, rather than a continuing resolution (CR) that would not accommodate these important priorities. n4a and our national aging organization colleagues have echoed to appropriators how critical an omnibus funding bill is to aging services programs, but it is important that your Representatives and Senators hear from your agency stressing the importance this strategy.

Please reach out to your lawmakers and tell them to support an omnibus appropriations bill that would:

- **Restore the capacity of OAA programs by increasing total funding to FY 2010 levels.** It is especially important to first restore funding to OAA programs that have had no relief from the sequester, including III B Supportive Services, III E National Family Caregiver Support Program, Title VI Native American aging programs and the Title VII Ombudsman program.

- **Provide at least $10 million for the Elder Justice Initiative, as called for in the Senate Labor/HHS measure earlier this year.** The problem of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation is growing while the federal response to it is not. It is estimated that one out of every ten people over the age of 60 is a victim of elder abuse. As a result, these victims often must rely on federal programs, enter nursing homes earlier and sadly live in poverty and with a reduced quality of life and well-being. The President recommended $25 million to help build a national infrastructure for Adult Protective Services and to improve our research to include evidence-based screening for elder abuse.
• Direct, through report language, the Federal Transit Administration to allocate at least $1 million of its technical assistance funding for the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) to support communities in their efforts to expand senior mobility options.

• Provide gap-filling funding for ADRCs, which otherwise will face a $10 million shortfall in FY 2015, due to the expiration of mandatory funding provided in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Appropriators can bridge this gap by through boosting discretionary appropriations to match current total funding level of $16 million in a FY 2015 omnibus bill. Failing to fill this gap will undermine years of investment in our nation’s ADRC/no-wrong-door systems as the Administration for Community Living will be forced to reduce grant funding by more than 60 percent.

**Take Action Now!**

By early next week it will be clear which funding strategy Congress will take to avert a government shutdown and keep federal agencies operating. But there is still time to make your voice heard. Reach out today about the importance of OAA funding and let your representatives know that critical investments cannot continue by simply extending funding through a CR.

**CALL AND EMAIL:** Call the district and state offices of your Representatives and Senators and submit comments via their websites. District and state office contact information is available on the websites as well.

To find their websites, use these online tools:

- **Senate:** [http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)
- **House:** [http://www.house.gov/representatives/](http://www.house.gov/representatives/)

**USE n4a RESOURCES TO AID YOUR ADVOCACY:** n4a has several resources available that can help your advocacy efforts. These resources, including our FY 2015 letter to appropriators, are available on [n4a’s appropriations campaign page](http://n4a.org/advocacy). You can also use the letter that n4a and other members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) sent to appropriators outlining lame-duck appropriations priorities.

More on engaging your Members can be found at [www.n4a.org/advocacy](http://www.n4a.org/advocacy).

**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.