



advocacy | action | answers on aging

Advocacy**ALERT** FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

CR Deadline Drives Focus on Appropriations Do Your Senators and Representatives Know Your Aging Funding Priorities?

December 4, 2017

On Friday at midnight, the current continuing resolution (CR) providing discretionary federal funding expires. It's clear that Congress is not ready to finalize any of the 12 appropriations bills, so absent a political train wreck that leads to a shutdown, we expect another CR to take its place. Whether that CR runs until December 22 or into January is what is currently being negotiated by Congress.

What's holding up these bills is the fact that Congress never agreed on how much to spend on all discretionary spending for this fiscal year. And if they don't pass legislation that lifts the suffocating budget caps in current law (the Budget Control Act of 2011), that overall number will be smaller than nearly all lawmakers want. But without an overall number, and the 12 different allocations to each appropriations subcommittee, final negotiations between House and Senate versions can't be finalized. That's why n4a is calling on Congress to pass a bipartisan budget deal NOW to resolve the issue and pave the way for final spending decisions in early 2018.

Thanks to advocates for your good work this fall in pushing for the highest possible levels for aging programs in FY 2018! With so much else consuming Congress's attention, we must keep up this drumbeat this month and into the new year.

Even if you took action in the summer and fall, please re-engage your Members of Congress now, and consider a fresh round of grassroots advocacy in your community. If we don't advocate for an OAA III B Supportive Services boost or against the elimination of the SHIP funding, who will?

Here's our ask of Congress: In a very challenging budget year, n4a secured a major advocacy win when Republican lawmakers in the House passed a \$14.2 million increase for Older Americans Act Title III B Supportive Services, but we still need to ensure that increase is reflected in a final bill. Aging advocates must also ensure that the House-passed elimination of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and cuts to the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) and Elder Justice programs are not reflected in a final bill. Instead, we are asking Congress to, at a minimum, fund SHIP, SCSEP and Elder Justice programs at the *Senate* proposed levels, which would spare these programs from any cuts over FY 2017.

How do we do that? n4a [sent a letter](#) to appropriations leaders in the House and Senate detailing our priorities for a final FY 2018 funding bill, and we will continue to press the

key appropriations offices. However, lawmakers are much more inclined to listen to their constituents, especially those passionate about a program that helps their community! Use our advocacy tools and resources to engage your grassroots and your Members of Congress on these important issues. *We need all 622 AAAs, 250+ Title VI Native American programs and all your local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding!*

Take Action Now:

Contact your Representatives and Senators NOW to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services. We've made it easy by creating this [template letter](#) that you can use to detail our current appropriations requests. Remember to fill in details about how these programs benefit seniors and caregivers in your community. We have additional resources to assist your advocacy efforts on our [FY 2018 Appropriations Campaign page](#).

Engage your grassroots networks and stakeholders in advocating for these programs with your Members of Congress. Use [n4a's template grassroots alert](#) to help frame your message, and add any other information that you think will help your appeal resonate locally.

STEP 1: Fax or, if you know staff members, email letters to your Senators and Representatives. If you can put it on your agency's letterhead that's ideal. If not, send it from your Advisory Board or even yourself as a private citizen. Or do all three! Use [n4a's updated template letter to Congress](#) to get started! (If you already did this back in October, make a follow-up request, noting that the current CR is about to expire and you'd like to know where funding for OAA programs stands.)

Send the letter via fax and email to their DC and district offices. Find that contact information on your Members' websites: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

STEP 2: Engage your grassroots in advocating for OAA, SHIP and Elder Justice programs. Use our updated [template grassroots alert](#) to 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. Ask them to call and email your Members of Congress, and include specific examples about what OAA funding means to them!

STEP 3: Make your support for funding for OAA, SHIP and Elder Justice programs public.

- Use social media to amplify your message. Members of Congress pay attention to respectful tweets from constituents!
- Attend any public events/town halls your Senators and Reps. are hosting between now and January.
- Turn your letter to your Member into a letter to the editor or op-ed and submit it to your local newspaper.
- Find out who of your agency's supporters knows the Member or will be seeing the Member and ask them to put in a good word for OAA funding and what it does in your community.

STEP 4: Invite Your Lawmakers to Visit. House and Senate lawmakers will be back in their states and districts frequently in early 2018 (and more often the closer

they get to the November elections), so get on their local calendars NOW and engage them in your upcoming events! Even if you don't have an appropriate public event, individual site visits are also a great opportunity to educate your elected officials about key programs your agency operates and the critical services you provide to their constituents. All you have to do is ask! (Tip: put the request in writing. Call, email or fax the DC office to ensure your request gets to the Scheduler.)

Stay tuned for more updates from n4a on the progress of the FY 2018 appropriations measure. You can find all of these tools and resources (and more!) on n4a's [FY 2018 Appropriations Campaign page](#).

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