



## Advocacy**ALERT** FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

### **RECESS ALERT: Keep Pushing for OAA Funding Reach out to your Senators and Representatives During Recess!**

**April 17, 2017**

Members of the House and the Senate are home in their districts and states this week, which is a key time to connect with your federal lawmakers about the importance of protecting funding for Older Americans Act and other aging programs.

As we detailed in our March 30 n4a [Advocacy Alert](#), appropriations season has begun in Washington, DC, and Members of Congress are beginning the process to determine funding for FY 2018.

And we need your help! **FY 2018 is going to be our most challenging budget year yet.** The most recent two-year budget deal that helped soften the blow of budget caps will expire at the end of FY 2017, which means overall levels for discretionary spending could be lower in FY 2018 than they were in FY 2017, making it even harder on appropriators to avoid cuts to discretionary programs—including OAA and other aging programs. And, as you read in our March 16 and March 28 [Legislative Updates](#), the Trump Administration has already proposed significant cuts or eliminations to programs that support seniors, and more cuts may be proposed in May when the Administration's full budget is released.

n4a has sent [our annual appropriations request letter](#) to Congress, and we've also begun requesting meetings with key Hill offices individually to make the case for investments in Older Americans Act (OAA) and other vital discretionary programs that help seniors.

**However, we need local agencies to take your advocacy to the next level!** Please keep reaching out to your Members of Congress—especially while they are home in their districts and states this week—to ensure that lawmakers protect vital aging services in their FY 2018 appropriations bills.

### **Why We Need Your Advocacy**

Effective grassroots advocacy is essential to ensure that lawmakers understand the value of OAA programs and the critical role they play in keeping older adults safe, healthy and independent in their homes and communities.

Years of stagnant funding, budget cuts and sequestration have taken their toll on the local aging programs developed and operated by AAAs and Title VI programs. With increasing costs and demand for services, the capacity of local agencies and service providers is shrinking.

We need all 622 AAAs, 256 Title VI Native American program and all their local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding. **We must ensure that Representatives and Senators know the risk of stagnant or reduced funding to their older constituents and communities.**

## The Ask:

**n4a is asking Congress to increase all OAA programs—but particularly Title III B Supportive Services—to, at a minimum, meet the modestly increased levels established in last year’s reauthorization bill.** We are also asking for prioritized increases for Title VI Native American Aging Program and the Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program. But n4a’s funding request letter was one of thousands sent to the Appropriations Committee’s leaders, asking for funding for specific programs, and n4a meetings with House and Senate offices will be one of hundreds staff members take. (A full list of n4a’s spending priorities can be found in our just-released [2017 Policy Priorities.](#))

## Take Action Now:

**Contact your Representatives and Senators NOW to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services.** Use [n4a’s March 6 letter](#) to appropriators as a template, but be sure to adjust it to fit your agency. Especially take the time to localize what this funding means for the older adults and people with disabilities in your state and community. Also, use [n4a’s FY 2018 appropriations campaign tools](#) to help. Stay tuned to our campaign page, as we will be adding resources in the weeks ahead, including simpler messages that you can use to activate consumers and local advocates!

**STEP 1: If You Haven’t Yet, Put Your Requests in Writing!** This isn’t the time for quick calls or generic emails—send a real letter requesting their support. 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! Send the letter via fax and email to their DC and district offices. Find that contact information on your Members’ websites: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

### **STEP 2: Make Your Support for OAA Funding Public.**

- Attend any public events/town halls your Senators and Reps. are hosting during in the final days of the Congressional recess, and raise OAA funding during the Q&A!
- 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 3: Invite Your Lawmakers to Visit.** Both chambers are currently in recess until April 254, and Members of the House will be back in their districts May 5-15 so get on their local calendars NOW and engage them in your May Older Americans Month 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.)

**STEP 4: Engage Your Provider Network.** Urge your vendors/providers, advisory board members and other important stakeholders to urge 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!

**Stay tuned for more updates from n4a, including consumer-friendly messages to drive calls to Congress as appropriations advance this month and next!**

---

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