



AdvocacyALERT

FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

Make the Ask for FY 2020 Aging Funding Reach out to your Senators and Representatives!

April 4, 2019

Appropriations season is well underway in Washington, DC, and Members of Congress have already started the process of determining funding for FY 2020, which is why advocates must connect with federal lawmakers NOW about the importance of increasing funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs.

Additionally, the current two-year budget agreement expires at the end of September, which means that to avoid significant across-the-board cuts in FY 2020, lawmakers must pass a budget agreement that raises overall spending caps. Overriding the Budget Control Act's caps for FY 2020 to give Congress a larger topline amount for discretionary spending is essential to protecting current funding levels for OAA and to achieving much-needed increases.

Translation: we have a lot of advocacy to do this spring and we need your help! n4a has sent our [annual appropriations request letter](#) to Congress, and we've also begun requesting meetings with key Hill offices to make the case for investments in Older Americans Act and other vital discretionary programs that help older adults. For the full list of n4a's requests for FY 2020 funding bills, check out [n4a's 2019 Policy Priorities](#).

But that's not enough: we need Congress to hear directly from their constituents.

Why We Need Your Advocacy

Years of stagnant funding and budget cuts have taken their toll on local aging programs. To make strides toward reversing this funding reality, n4a is taking a two-pronged approach on FY 2020 funding:

1. **Lawmakers must raise overall budget caps in FY 2020 and beyond to ensure there is enough funding available overall to increase OAA programs.**
2. **Appropriators must make bold investments in OAA programs—especially Titles III B (Supportive Services), III E (caregiver support) and Title VI Native American aging programs—to begin to restore the capacity of the local agencies delivering these services that has been lost during years of austerity.**

We need all AAAs, Title VI Native American programs and all their local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding. **We must ensure that all members of Congress know that stagnant and eroding funding risks the health, well-being and independence of their older constituents.**

The good news is, many Members of Congress are already on board with these requests! Last month 130 Members of the House signed on to a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) asking for bold increases for critical Title III B and E programs!

Take Action Now

Contact your Representatives and Senators NOW to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services. Use n4a's [April 4 letter](#) to appropriators as a template but customize it to fit your agency. It is important that you take the time to localize what this funding means for the older adults and caregivers in your state and community.

STEP 1: Put Your Requests in Writing! 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! [Use our template](#) but customize to your agency/community. Send the letter email to their DC and district offices. Find that contact information on your Members' websites: www.house.gov and 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 next congressional recesses (April 15–26 and then May 27–31) 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 whether any of your agency's supporters know the Members of Congress serving your community or if they will be seeing them at any events. If so, ask that they put in a good word for OAA funding and its impact in your community.

STEP 3: Invite Your Lawmakers to Visit. Members of Congress will be back in their states and districts April 15–26 (and later, May 27–31) so get on their local calendars NOW and engage them in your May Older Americans Month or other events! Individual site visits are also a great opportunity to educate your elected officials about the critical services you provide to their constituents. All you have to do is ask! (*Tip: put the request in writing. Call or email 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 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 to [n4a's FY 2020 appropriations campaign page](#) for additional advocacy resources, including an upcoming template advocacy alert that you can use with your grassroots advocates!

Stay tuned for more updates from n4a and 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 at acampbell@n4a.org and Amy Gotwals at agotwals@n4a.org.