



Advocacy**ALERT** FOR n4a MEMBERS & ALLIES

Federal Lawmakers Are Home Next Week Recess Is a Perfect Opportunity to Advocate for FY 19 Funding!

May 23, 2018

Members of the House and Senate will be back in their districts and states next week for the Memorial Day recess. This is a perfect opportunity to connect with your lawmakers and continue advocating for FY 2019 appropriations. Appropriations season is well underway, and when lawmakers return to DC in June they will focus on debating respective House and Senate funding proposals for many federal agencies, including AoA/ACL within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). While there are many steps that Congress will need to take before finalizing funding for FY 2019, this is the ideal time for advocates to connect with federal lawmakers about the importance of protecting funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs. This *Alert* provides the tools you need to reach out from your agency, as well as activate other community stakeholders to take action.

After a long-fought battle to achieve [significant increases](#) to many OAA programs and services in FY 2018, as well as the preserving of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), LIHEAP, Senior Corps and several important block grants, it is critical to continue our advocacy drumbeat to preserve and boost these wins. The FY 2018 increases and February's bipartisan budget deal serve as a strong baseline going into FY 2019 funding debates, but we should take nothing for granted and put our advocacy skills to use!

Why We Need Your Advocacy

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

There's still much work to be done. Let's not forget that:

- The Trump Administration has called upon Congress to eliminate several important programs that serve older adults such as SHIP, OAA Title V and Senior Corps. (For details, see our [Feb. 21 Legislative Update](#).) Additionally, the Administration is promoting proposals to roll-back previously determined funding (see our [May 11 Legislative Update](#)—Congress has not yet taken up this proposal, but may do so in June).
- Congress will have to decide how to divvy up the larger FY 2019 "pie" among the 12 appropriations subcommittees, and as other priorities arise, it is possible that

there could be less funding than there was in FY 2018 for the Labor/HHS/Education subcommittee's bill.

- Within the Labor/HHS bill, there will be fierce competition between various interests and programs, so our voices have to be heard amidst the cacophony of other advocates!
- Preventing a proposed cut in the first place (such as the SHIP cuts proposed by both House and Senate in the past several years) is better than having to fight to the finish line to stop a bad recommendation in the final bill, as we had to in 2017-2018.

That's why we need you to continue reaching out—especially when your Members are back at home in their districts and states! As we noted earlier, n4a has sent our [annual appropriations request letter](#) to Congress, but we **need local agencies to take your advocacy to the next level!** Please reach out to your Members of Congress—especially during recess—to ensure that lawmakers protect vital aging services in their FY 2019 appropriations bills. Then, after that, push out an alert of your own in your community to ensure that other voices join the call for increased funding.

The Ask

n4a is asking Congress to increase all OAA programs—but particularly Title III B Supportive Services, the 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 [2018 Policy Priorities](#).) This is why we need your support at the local level to back up our funding request.

Take Action Now

Contact your Representatives and Senators NOW to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services. You can use n4a's [April 16 letter](#) to appropriators or use this template letter to customize your outreach for 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—in particular how older adults and caregivers will be served by any additional funding your state receives. [n4a's FY 2019 appropriations campaign tools](#) will help with [messaging that you can send to your grassroots networks](#) to encourage advocacy!

STEP 1: If You Haven't Yet, Put Your Requests in Writing! Many local agencies have already sent a letter regarding FY 2019 funding to their Congressional Delegations. If you haven't yet, it would be ideal if you crafted a letter to put on your agency's letterhead. If that's not possible, 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 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: Make Your Support for OAA Funding Public.

- Attend any public events/town halls your Senators and Reps. are hosting during the next week's congressional recesses 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. If you don't have a meeting or visit planned for next week, use the recess to schedule an in-person meeting or visit with your federally elected officials during the NEXT Congressional recess (June 29–July 7). Get on their local calendars NOW, and remember that individual site visits when your elected are home are a great opportunity to educate them 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 [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!

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.