If We Want to Be Thankful Next Year, Raise Your Voice NOW for More OAA Funding!

November 16, 2022

While the surprising mid-term elections aren’t quite over as a few races remain undetermined including a Senate seat for Georgia, there is still a decent chance that THIS Congress will finalize FY 2023 spending in the lame-duck period after Thanksgiving. So, before you dive into the mashed potatoes next week, please send ONE MORE EMAIL to your current congressional delegation.

What Congress Needs to Do:
When the continuing resolution (CR) keeping the government open absent final FY 2023 spending bills expires, Congress needs to either pass another CR or finish its work by passing one massive bill consisting of the 12 smaller bills that haven’t been signed into law, despite an October 1 deadline.

But before they dive into negotiations on the spending levels for thousands of programs, Republicans and Democrats need to agree on how much in total to spend! With the elections (mostly) behind them, we think there will be support for finally getting this deal done. Most Members of Congress want this done in 2022, so they have a clean slate in the new Congress. After that “topline” number is set, then the race is on to take the numbers proposed by House and Senate Democrats and adjust accordingly to get enough Republican support for passage.

What You Need to Do:
If we all don’t make a lot of noise in the next two weeks about the need for Older Americans Act funding increases (specifically OAA Title III B, III E and Title VI as meals programs already have a lot of political support), we could be stuck at level funding as happened last year.

Advocates for every discretionary program will also be making noise during this period so we have to go big: are you ready to get really loud for the Older Americans Act?

Why:
We must ensure that FY 2023 appropriations figures reflect the ongoing and growing need to sustain and expand the life-saving programs and services that AAAs and Title VI programs deliver. Appropriators must understand the incredible work you have done, why it matters to the health and independence of their constituents—and that this work needs to be sufficiently funded.
We are calling on all AAAs, Title VI programs and all your local allies to raise your voices in support of Older Americans Act funding today! We need you to **reach out to your Senators and urge them to support the highest possible spending levels—the House-passed levels or higher—to support older adults and caregivers in their communities!**

**How to Take Action Now:**

It is imperative that all Senators and Representatives hear from OAA champions in their state and constituents who benefit from the OAA programs and services that your agency delivers.

**Send an email to both current Senators and all Representatives that represent constituents in your PSA.** Here’s a template to customize. Look on your Members’ websites to find emails or use their email form.

Dear Senator X or Representative Y:

On behalf of [YOUR AGENCY NAME] in [AGENCY LOCATION/STATE], I am writing regarding the FY 2023 federal funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs within the U.S. Administration on Community Living (ACL) in the Department of Health and Human Services. I urge you to weigh in on the final spending levels for the OAA as soon as possible, to ensure that an omnibus bill is passed this year *and* that the bill reflects the urgent and smart investments that our nation requires.

Funding for OAA programs and services is essential to the health and independence of millions of older adults and caregivers, including the [ADD LOCAL NUMBER] of the older adults and caregivers that [YOUR AGENCY NAME] serves in your district. These OAA programs and services are funded through the ACL at the federal level and delivered locally by [AGENCY NAME] in partnership with our network of community providers.

While we support increases to every part of the OAA, we encourage you to pay special attention to and significantly increase the capacity of several OAA programs, starting with OAA Title III B Supportive Services, our most flexible source of OAA funding and a backbone set of services that proved especially invaluable throughout the pandemic. [INSERT LOCAL EXAMPLES OF HOW TITLE III B SUPPORTS OLDER ADULTS—INCLUDE LOCAL DATA IF POSSIBLE ABOUT THE VALUE OF III B SUPPORTS.] Our agency also administers programs to support family caregivers under the OAA’s Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program. [INSERT LOCAL EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU PROVIDE UNDER III E] Under OAA Title III D, we operate the following evidence-based programs to help older adults better manage their health and avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and health expenditures: [NAME OF YOUR EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM(S)]. [Title VI programs should obviously detail their offerings as well.]

Please help secure at least the House-recommended levels for these essential programs! We simply can’t afford to go another year with level annual funding when the aging population is growing—in size and complexity of needs that require support as people live longer. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance or a resource to you on the needs of older adults and caregivers in your [STATE/DISTRICT] and aging issues.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME, AFFILIATION AND CONTACT INFO if not already in your email signature]
Please do take the 10-15 minutes total it should take you to send these emails. This is our time to make a final push!

Thank you for your advocacy!

--

If you have questions or concerns about this Advocacy Alert or USAging’s policy positions, please contact Amy Gotwals at agotwals@usaging.org.