



## **Time Waits for No One, Make Your Voice Count on OAA Funding!**

**November 1, 2023**

Just when we thought the chaos of summer was over, we entered the fall season with mayhem on the Hill and lots of uncertainty regarding FY 2024 OAA funding. A government shutdown was looming over our heads for much of September, but Congress avoided one by passing a continuing resolution (CR) that temporarily funds the government at FY 2023 levels through November 17 and Congress has less than a month to either pass spending measures to finalize FY 2024 levels or agree on another CR in lieu of a permanent funding solution. (While we won't be discussing the risk of another shutdown threat just yet, it is certainly a possibility this month.)

**The long-awaited House Labor/HHS appropriations bill is unreleased yet has been scheduled for a vote on the House floor on the week of November 13. USAging is calling on advocates to push Congress to protect Older Americans Act funding in any measure!**

While this is not our first rodeo dealing with fall government-funding drama this was the first time a Speaker of the House has been voted out of the job, which has meant further delays in the appropriations process. Last week, House Republicans have finally elected a new Speaker of the House, Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA). Even with a new Speaker in place, there is much uncertainty as the House gets back to business including several "must-pass" items such as appropriations bills!

Given the dynamics of a House majority that wants to cut overall spending and a Senate that has taken a more modest approach *and* the looming deadline of November 17, USAging is concerned about several problematic outcomes. These possibly include, in best to worst order, being under a year-long CR at FY 2023 levels and losing the III C increases [proposed by the Senate](#), an across-the-board cut to all programs in a CR or final bill, or a prolonged shutdown, which would cause major cash flow issues for the Aging

Network within weeks and we fear would only drive further cuts. That's why we are calling on all OAA champions to re-start your appropriations advocacy and push Congress to finalize actual—and the highest possible—spending levels for OAA in FY 2024.

In our FY 2024 appropriations asks, **USAging urges Congress to double funding for three subtitles of the Act:** Title III B (Supportive Services), Title VI (Native American Aging Programs) and Title III E (National Family Caregiver Support Program). While it is unlikely we will get the increases we want, we still need to fight against any funding cuts to these critical programs!

Our collective goal is to ensure that members of Congress:

- 1) Protect the OAA from any cuts; and
- 2) Recognize that funding for the Aging Network's programs and services needs to be ***significantly increased on a long-term basis*** for three reasons: to serve the rapidly growing numbers of older adults who need them, to meet the greater complexity of needs among the older adults you serve, and to address the workforce challenges that are affecting older adults' access to services.

## Take Action

**Contact your Representatives and Senators NOW to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services.** Read USAging's [appropriations request letter](#) and use our [grassroots template letter](#) to customize your asks to reflect your agency/program. Give your members of Congress a sense of how their communities are affected—take the time to localize what this funding means for the older adults and caregivers in your community, tribe or state.

**See USAging's [Advocacy Tools for FY 2024 OAA Appropriations](#) for more resources you can use in your advocacy efforts!** We hope these tools will help you to encourage your network of local advocates to take action now! Here's your to-do list:

1. **Put your agency on record. Send an updated letter to your Members of Congress—especially in the House.** Use [USAging's updated template letter](#) to send your own messages about the importance of funding increases to your Members of Congress.
2. **Schedule meetings with your lawmakers.** Request virtual meetings! This is 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.)

3. **Engage your grassroots.** Using our toolkit or your own creative ideas, get the word out in your networks that action is needed now! Here are some approaches you could take:

- **Ask your grassroots to email or post a short social media note to lawmakers.** Members monitor their email/website traffic for constituent correspondence, and personal messages resonate most. Ask your advocates to share why OAA is important to them.
- **Share stories in person.** Invite your Member of Congress to come see your agency in action and meet some of their constituents receiving OAA services!

We need all AAAs, Title VI Native American programs and local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding. **We must ensure that all members of Congress know how important robust federal funding for OAA is to promote the health, well-being and independence of their older constituents and those who care for them.**

Stay tuned for more updates from USAging and thank you for your advocacy on this important issue!

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**If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert*** or USAging's policy positions, please contact the USAging Policy Team, Amy Gotwals, Olivia Umoren and Seth Ickes at [policy@usaging.org](mailto:policy@usaging.org).