November 1, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chair
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As Congress works to finalize FY 2024 appropriations measures, USAging urges you to prioritize funding for the Older Americans Act (OAA), which provides a range of critical services to support older adults in aging successfully at home and in their communities.

As you work across parties and chambers to finalize FY 2024 appropriations levels, USAging urges you to adopt the highest possible funding levels for all OAA programs and services. All OAA subtitles require immediate increase to meet the current and future needs of older adults. However, on behalf of our AAA and Title VI Native American Aging Program members, USAging urges Congress to prioritize the following OAA services when finalizing the FY 2024 budget for the U.S. Administration on Aging, housed within the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services:

- **OAA Title III B Home and Community-Based Supportive Services**
- **OAA Title VI Grants for Native American Aging Programs,** Part A (nutrition and supportive services) and Part C (family caregiver support)
- **OAA Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program**

USAging represents the country’s 614 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and advocates for the more than 280 Title VI Native American Aging Programs, both of which have significant roles in the planning and delivery of OAA
programs and services. With OAA and other resources, our members are the local leaders that develop, coordinate and deliver a wide range of home and community-based services, including information and referral/assistance, case management, home-delivered and congregate meals, in-home services, caregiver supports, transportation, evidence-based health and wellness programs, long-term care ombudsman programs and more.

The OAA is the cornerstone of the nation’s non-Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) system. Each year, through the OAA, nearly 11 million older Americans receive critical support from the nationwide Aging Network, which consists of states, AAAs, Title VI programs and tens of thousands of local service providers. For more than 50 years, OAA programs and services have been essential to ensuring that older Americans age with independence, health and dignity in their homes and communities.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the Aging Network has served more older adults than ever before by providing life-saving services thanks to federal emergency relief funds and rapid innovation to meet the growing demand for services. OAA services like those provided by AAAs can delay or prevent the need for higher level or more expensive (i.e., nursing home) care, postponing impoverishment and eligibility for the means-tested Medicaid long-term care program. Increased investment in OAA will provide longer-term value for these much-needed services.

**While the appropriations process has proven to be particularly challenging this year, we urge Congress to, at the very minimum, protect all OAA programs from any cuts, whether targeted or across-the-board.** Ten thousand Americans turn 65 every day and that historic pace is not slowing anytime soon. USAging originally asked Congress to double several of the OAA programs, given the growing need our members report from communities across the nation. We still urge you to increase funding for the above programs yet recognize that if an increase is not possible to the degree needed by millions of older adults and family caregivers, you at least ensure that these vital services can continue uninterrupted. USAging also urges Congress to finalize FY 2024 funding levels as soon as possible and resist resorting to a year-long or a series of continuing resolutions. Our members report that federal fiscal uncertainty creates cash flow issues and **ultimately affects their inability to provide the necessary home and community-based services for older adults.**

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Amy Gotwals, Chief, Public
Policy and External Affairs, and Olivia Umoren, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy, at policy@usaging.org.

Sincerely,

Sandy Markwood
Chief Executive Officer

cc:
Chair Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Committee
Vice Chair Susan Collins, Senate Appropriations Committee
Chair Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, House Appropriations Committee
Members of the House and Senate Labor/HHS/Education Subcommittees