



OAA Increases in Jeopardy

Congress Needs to Hear From You on FY 2022 Bill

February 14, 2022

We have a Valentine's message for you to give to your legislators! Last week the House passed yet another short-term continuing resolution (CR) through March 11 so Members can continue to negotiate the FY 2022 spending bills. With the Senate poised to pass the short-term CR this week, we are thankful it is not the dreaded year-long CR we have advocated against, but this could be our last chance to ensure it doesn't become one. We've been down this road before and while there are claims of progress in bipartisan negotiations on FY 2022 spending levels, we cannot assume success until we have an actual final bill.

Your tireless outreach is not unnoticed but now more than ever we need to remain vigilant in our advocacy to protect a critical reset of annual spending levels for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and services. Without new, elevated thresholds for *annual* OAA funding, Area Agencies on Aging, Title VI Native American Aging Programs and your providers won't be able to continue to meet the current needs of older adults and caregivers—nor will you be able to keep up with expected increases in levels of need as the population ages and needs grow.

Call your legislators today to make these THREE critical points:

- 1. Congress must pass a final bill and NOT a year-long CR.** As House and Senate appropriators negotiate specific spending levels over the next few weeks, we need your advocacy to secure *new* thresholds for OAA spending and not have Congress rely on the outdated and insufficient funding levels of a pre-COVID era. If a year-long CR is passed, these programs will not see any increases over FY 2021 levels. Share facts and stories about what limiting access to, growth of and innovation of critically needed programs and services will look like in your community.
- 2. Congress must negotiate a strong deal for older adults on FY 2022 levels for Older Americans Act and other aging programs and services.** As bipartisan negotiations take place, we expect the recommended increases proposed by Democrats last year to be reduced across all 12

spending bills. That's why we need you to push for the [House-passed OAA increases](#) and relay the critical local stories and data that supports these needed increases.

- 3. Congress needs to provide an ARPA match waiver that should be included in the latest spending bills.** The FY 2022 spending bill provides an opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of a retroactive waiver of the OAA state and local match requirements for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) relief funding provided by Congress in the spring—a congressional oversight that USAging and our national partners have been working to remedy ever since. While some AAAs have been able to raise the match and access ARPA funding, many AAAs are still struggling to identify a match and receive this much-needed relief funding—or have otherwise been restricted in their offerings thanks to the pressure of the match requirements. Your advocacy can make a difference in attaining this vital match waiver for AAAs nationwide.

Take Action Today

Contact Congress! It doesn't matter if you have already connected with your Members of Congress and asked your grassroots networks to engage on OAA appropriations levels, it is imperative that all Senators and Representatives continue to hear from OAA champions at this point in the process.

Advocacy with Members on the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Appropriations Committees is especially important. If your Representative or Senator serves on one of these key committees, your letter should request that they share your messages with their committee leaders. At this point, many funding decisions are being made at a leadership level, and the more they hear from their committee colleagues, the more seriously they will consider these requests.

STEP 1: Visit [USAgings FY 2022 OAA Appropriations Advocacy Toolkit](#) to assist your efforts. Our resources include everything you need to take action:

- Template letters for you to send and share ([AAA](#) and [Title VI](#) versions)
- [Current appropriations chart](#)
- [Additional resources as background](#)

STEP 2: Call your Senators today in their DC offices. The Capitol Switchboard (202.224.3121) can connect you to your Senator's DC offices or you can use www.senate.gov to look up their websites to send emails (see Step 1 for language and talking points to convey your message, then follow up with an email to reinforce the importance of this issue if you can).

STEP 3: Put your agency on record. Send a letter using our templates but customize to your agency/community. Send the letter via email to their DC and district offices. Find that contact information on your Members' websites: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

STEP 4: Make Your Support for OAA Funding Public. Email or post a short note

to lawmakers on social media. Members monitor their email/website traffic for constituent correspondence, and personal messages resonate most.

STEP 5: Engage Your Provider Network. Enlist fellow advocates! Urge your providers, advisory board members and other important stakeholders to send their own letters to Congress or post to social media. Please do all you can to amplify the message and engage others who understand the value of OAA in their community! You're welcome to forward this *Advocacy Alert* to your networks or edit it to be best received by your advocates.

We need all AAAs, Title VI aging programs and local allies to raise their voices in support of Older Americans Act funding and make the local case against a long-term CRs without any increases. **We must ensure that all Members of Congress know how important increased, stable, federal funding for OAA is to promote the health, well-being and independence of their older constituents and those who support them.**

If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert* or USAging's policy positions, please contact Amy Gotwals at agotwals@usaging.org and Monica Billger at mbillger@usaging.org.