



Support Older Americans: Increase Funding for Food, Jobs, and Care Now!

What is Going On?

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is the backbone of services to America's aging population, funding programs that help to preserve the health and independence of our nation's seniors. In addition, OAA programs have been proven to actually save taxpayers' dollars by reducing premature nursing home placement, averting malnutrition and controlling chronic health conditions – thus reducing Medicaid and Medicare expenditures. Regardless of its success, funding for OAA and its many programs has not even kept up with inflation, let alone the increasing demand for services. At \$1.9 billion, the 2009 funding for the OAA is very close to its 2002 level. Without your immediate attention, this flat funding of OAA will result in severe cutbacks in aging services to our senior community.

What Can I Do?

Starting today, make time to meet with your U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators on the relevant committees¹ to urge them to increase OAA by 9 percent for Fiscal Year 2009! You can do this by:

- (1) Attending a town meeting where the member of Congress will take questions. If you do not know of a scheduled town meeting in your area, call the local office of your Representative or Senator and ask what they have scheduled; or
- (2) Calling the local office and set up your own appointment. You will have a greater chance of success if you line up other interested people to go with you and if you try to arrange the meetings at the beginning or end of the week.

When Do I Start?

Today! Word on the street is that the respective committee members are considering this funding issue now and are should make a final determination toward mid-late May of this year.

What Should I Say?

Urge your Senator or Representative to:

- (1) Increase funding for all existing OAA programs by 9 percent (about \$171 million) in FY09; and
- (2) Provide sufficient funding for all new program initiatives in the 2006 OAA reauthorization.

What Happens Next?

After meeting with your members of Congress or their staff, please contact Sarah Byrne (202-637-5051) (sbyrne@retiredamericans.org) and Kaja Snell (202-637-5277) (ksnell@retiredamericans.org). We will both work to keep you informed on the progress of OAA funding and will mention your field visits while lobbying in Washington, D.C. on your behalf.

¹ U.S. House; Labor, Health & Human Services Subcommittee (Appropriations) Members: Dem: Lowey, DeLauro, Jackson, Kennedy, Roybal-Allard, Lee, Udall, Honda, McCollum, Ryan. Rep: Walsh, Regula, Peterson, Weldon, Simpson, Rehberg, Lewis. U.S. Senate; Labor, Health & Human Services Subcommittee (Appropriations) Members: Harkin, Inouye, Kohl, Murray, Landrieu, Durbin, Reed, Lautenberg.



Talking Points for Alliance Activists on OAA Appropriations

OAA Helps People, Saves Money

- Congress can help more seniors stay healthy and independent in their communities by investing in Older Americans Act programs and services. (*Give local statistics or use anecdotes to help “put a face” on the issue.*) OAA programs and services help older adults:
 - live safely at home
 - make essential trips in the community
 - eat well and stay healthy
 - live with dignity, and
 - avoid unnecessary, more costly care
- Investing in home and community-based care is far more cost effective, in economic and human terms, than paying for Medicare health care claims, Medicaid nursing home bills, or losing the economic and social contributions of older Americans. The cost of home and community-based care is estimated to be one-quarter of the cost of institutional care.

Stagnant Funding Is Unworkable

- OAA programs’ budgets have eroded over the last several years as federal funding has not kept pace with inflation or the growing population of individuals in need of services.
- As a result, services funded by these programs have lost considerable service capacity, causing many families to be placed on waiting lists for supportive services, adding to their emotional, physical and financial hardships. (*Mention local statistics and needs!*)
- Demand will only continue to grow as the 77 million baby boomers age. By 2030, 70 million Americans — twice the number in 2000 — will be 65 and older, comprising 20 percent of the U.S. population.

What Can Congress Do?

- **Increase funding for all OAA programs by 9 percent (about \$171 million) in FY09.**
- Such an increase would begin to make up for the erosion of federal OAA funds over the past six years, and it would hold existing programs harmless from further funding loss due to a burgeoning eligible population and inflation.



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