

1 National Association of Regional Councils
2 Policy Statement on Reauthorization of the
3 Older Americans Act

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5 **INTRODUCTION**
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7 The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) urges Congress to reauthorize
8 the Older Americans Act (OAA) for no less than five years and to fully fund the OAA so
9 that it can meet the needs of all eligible older Americans.

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11 The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) fully supports the Older
12 Americans Act (OAA) and the home and community-based services it provides to enable
13 older Americans to live independently, at home and within their communities.

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15 NARC also supports the critical role that the nation's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)
16 play delivering necessary services to older Americans, many of which are administered
17 through regional councils and councils of governments.

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19 NARC urges Congress to provide AAAs with the funding necessary to provide eligible
20 low-income older Americans with the services and assistance they require.

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23 **REAUTHORIZATION**

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25 NARC urges Congress to:

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27 *Improve Older Americans Act care programs*, including congregate and home
28 delivered meals, transportation and in-home services, as part of a larger
29 programmatic effort to maximize the independence of older Americans.

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31 *Recognize the importance of caregivers and invest in caregiver support*
32 *programs* to ensure that those providing care to older relatives receive the
33 training, respite, support and other assistance needed to continue to successfully
34 provide caregiver services.

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36 *Strengthen access to a wide range of social services* including those that protect
37 older Americans from elder abuse, and address social isolation, ageism and
38 major demographic changes.

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40 *Promote healthy living* through programs that target senior-specific issues such
41 as fall prevention and chronic disease self-management, help improve overall
42 quality of life, enhance medical care, and strengthen long-term care and the
43 related ombudsman services.

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45 *Integrate social and health care services* in a way that promotes health and
46 reduces the need for costly medical interventions by addressing critical social
47 determinants of health.

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49 *Support the public/private partnerships and volunteer networks* that make it
50 possible for AAAs to deliver services to millions of older Americans nationwide.

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52 *Support livable and age friendly communities* that make it possible for older
53 Americans to access services and rely on infrastructure that make it possible for
54 older Americans to age in place and remain vibrant, contributing members of the
55 communities in which they live.

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57 *Expand and enhance part-time community service employment and training* to
58 low-income, unemployed people ages 55 and older so that these older
59 Americans may remain in the workforce, better support them, serve their
60 communities, and contribute to the economy as a whole.

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62 *Improve state and area planning processes to ensure collaboration and*
63 *transparency* so that local needs, as identified by AAAs, are reflected in State
64 plans. Also, ensure that AAAs are permitted to develop area plans that exceed
65 the scope of the OAA if community needs require it.

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67 *Grant AAAs the authority and flexibility to use funds for local pilot programs and*
68 *other programmatic innovations in keeping with local needs.*

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APPROPRIATIONS

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73 *NARC urges Congress to fully fund all activities authorized by the OAA, including*
74 *those under Title IV, for the following reasons:*

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76 1. The U.S. population is aging, and the demand for services is increasing.

77 More and more older Americans are reliant on nutrition, health,

78 transportation, and other services to age in place.

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80 2. The entire baby-boomer generation is approaching retirement age. This

81 has sparked a historic demographic shift in the number of older adults.

82 This shift will continue in future generations as people live longer.

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84 3. One in five Americans will be 65 and over by the year 2030, and the

85 growth of this cohort will continue to outstrip any increase in the number of

86 Americans below the age of 65.

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88 Despite the increase in the number of older Americans, funding for the Older

89 Americans Act has increased, on average, by only 1.1 percent annually over the

90 past 18 years (from \$1.68 billion to \$2.06 billion). When inflation and population
91 growth are accounted for the OAA appropriation has actually decreased by
92 nearly 25 percent since 2010. This relative loss in funding has made it
93 increasingly difficult for states and AAA to fulfill their responsibilities under the
94 OAA.

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CONCLUSION

98 NARC urges Congress to act immediately to reauthorize and improve the Older
99 Americans Act by following NARC's 10 recommendations, and approve full
100 funding of all OAA programs including those under Title IV of the Older
101 Americans Act so that the goals and objectives of the OAA are met.