

August 12, 2025

Honorable [REPRESENTATIVE'S NAME]
U.S. House of Representatives
[Office Address]
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative [NAME]:

On behalf of the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging, I am writing regarding FY 2026 federal funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) within the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Department of Labor. We are also an Area Agency on Aging, one of 614 in the country designated by the OAA to address the needs and concerns of older adults at the local levels.

The Senate Appropriations Committee recently passed its Labor/HHS spending bill with level funding for most OAA programs. These programs are critical to the older adults we serve, and funding will assist in ensuring older adults continue to receive the support they need. However, consistently level-funding these programs represents a cut when compared to the rapidly growing older adult population and increased cost of service provision, and we urge Congress to provide a meaningful increase to OAA funding in FY 2026.

Funding for OAA programs and services is essential to the health and independence of millions of older adults and caregivers, including the more than 190,000 older adults and caregivers that we serve in your district. These OAA programs and services are funded through ACL, then through our State Unit on Aging and then developed, coordinated and delivered locally by the Milwaukee County Area Agency on Aging in partnership with our network of community providers. In Milwaukee County, the aging population is growing rapidly. The population of older adults has increased by twenty-five percent from 2010 to 2023, the fastest of any age cohort, and this trend will continue until at least 2040.

The OAA creates community resources for older adults to access a wide array of programs and services, including information and referral to find help for their challenges with aging; congregate and home-delivered meals to address hunger, malnutrition and social isolation; health and wellness programs; in-home care support; transportation; adult day care and other needed options. Family caregivers, who contribute more long-term care than any formal government program, can also access OAA-funded respite, training, support and help navigating their caregiving roles.

While all OAA subtitles require increases to meet the current and future needs of older adults, we urge Congress to particularly prioritize, protect and increase funding for the following OAA services:

- Title III-B Home and Community-Based Supportive Services
- Title III-C Nutrition Services
- Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Program.

OAA Title III-B is our most flexible source of OAA funding, and a backbone set of services. However, despite its critical role in the lives of older adults, Title III-B has been underfunded for years. Our Title III-B services provide transportation to medical appointments and the grocery store, free legal representation and advice, senior centers and socialization, counseling services, and more that allows

older adults to live well in the community.

Title III-C Nutrition Services provides funding to administer congregate and home-delivered meals. With our funding we serve meals at community and senior centers, senior housing complexes, at restaurants, and via meals on wheels. However, funding in this program fails to meet demand and rising food costs. To ensure we are using funds efficiently and serving those in greatest need, we are forced to close several senior dining locations. Unless additional funding is provided, we will continue to face difficult decisions like this.

Our agency also administers programs to support family caregivers under the OAA's Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Program, which is the only national program supporting the family caregivers of older adults—who provide most of the long-term care in this country. In 2024, we supported 121 family caregivers with grants to pay for supports like respite, equipment, home modifications, or self-care. In 2025, interest in the program exceeded the amount of funding received and we created a waitlist in early August 2025.

We thank the Senate Appropriations Committee for providing funding for programs set for elimination in the President's FY 2026 budget, and we urge the House to also provide full funding for the following programs:

- LIHEAP
- CSBG
- OAA Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Please feel free to reach out anytime on these or any aging issues of importance to you and your constituents.

Sincerely,

[NAME, affiliation, address, etc.]