



Sent via Email: OAA@help.senate.gov

July 18, 2024

Dear Chair Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, Sen. Casey, Sen. Braun, Sen. Kaine, Sen. Collins, Sen. Markey, and Sen. Mullin,

Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) and Grantmakers In Health (GIH) are pleased to respond to your request for feedback on the discussion draft to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). GIA is a community of funders mobilizing money and ideas to strengthen policies, programs, and resources for all of us as we age, and GIH helps foundations and corporate giving programs improve the health of all people. Together, we represent hundreds of philanthropies addressing the social drivers of health across the country, in partnership with government.

We applaud the Committee's inclusion of the White House Conference on Aging in the draft, with provisions for accepting gifts, as one important strategy to strengthen this partnership. As stated in our response to the RFI, GIA and GIH stand ready to mobilize private philanthropy to support and co-fund preparatory meetings, stakeholder consultations, travel costs, and other measures to make a Congressionally authorized White House Conference on Aging as inclusive and productive as possible. We hope that philanthropic leaders will be included in the planning of a Conference and considered as Delegates.

We also appreciate the focus on paid and unpaid caregivers through a Direct Care Workforce Resource Center, reauthorization of the RAISE Family Caregivers Act, and recognition of the diverse circumstances of caregivers. GIA and GIH members remain committed to supporting RAISE implementation, in partnership with government, and hope to see continued authorization of discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. We continue to track our members' grants directly aligned with each of the goals of the Strategy, totaling \$116 million from 2021 – 2023, to avoid funding gaps, redundancies, and inequities.

Multisector Plans for Aging are a vehicle to strengthen public-private partnerships at the state level and optimize Older Americans Act programs and services through coordinated actions across state government. We were disappointed that Multisector Plans for Aging were not included in the draft. Multisector Plans add value to State Plans on Aging by engaging sectors that affect and are affected by the aging population, such as transportation, housing, and economic development. We aspire to have a Multisector Plan in every state, reflecting the values and priorities of current and future older constituents, and hope to see Multisector Plans

referenced and incentivized in the final act. We stand ready to translate any Congressional recognition of Multisector Plans into meaningful benefits for older Americans.

We had also hoped to see additional support for the Research, Demonstration, and Evaluation Center in Title IV. Building on the current exclusive focus on falls prevention, additional support for the RDE Center in Title IV, across the full range of OAA functions, will generate actionable knowledge across the aging field by testing new models of service delivery and collecting and sharing data. New evidence will galvanize more philanthropic support and help to direct public and private dollars to interventions that are working, scalable, and customizable to meet the needs of diverse communities.

It is particularly important to ensure Older Americans Act programs and services are reaching older people in underserved communities, including rural areas. While older people in rural communities are referenced in the draft, we still need a consistent definition of rurality to equitably deploy public and private dollars to aging services. We recommend the development of a consistent definition be included in the Act, recognizing that such a definition will also help to direct resources to meet the needs of people of all ages in rural communities. We also recommend including demographic and geographic characteristics in all evaluations of OAA programs, and that stakeholders with lived experience and expertise in the experiences and needs of diverse older adults be included in planning the White House Conference on Aging.

Among the most civically engaged, long-term residents, with the highest rates of volunteerism and voting, older people are assets to communities. Yet, as we age, we may face challenges that can limit our civic participation and negatively impact our quality of life. The Aging Network plays an essential role in our democracy, ensuring that as we age, we can meet our basic needs, contribute to our communities, retain our social connections, and live with dignity and respect. Yet, current funding for this Network and its services is woefully inadequate relative to the unmet need. We hope that appropriations will be commensurate with the scope of the Act, the growth of the aging population, and the increased demand for services. We believe that an increased federal appropriation will generate increased and more targeted philanthropic funding. Please consider GIA and GIH as a resource and partner as you move forward.

Sincerely,



Lindsay Goldman, LMSW
CEO
Grantmakers In Aging



Cara V. James, PhD
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