
PROGRESS REPORT

OLDER AMERICANS ACT REAUTHORIZATION CAMPAIGN



In October 2023, Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) and Grantmakers In Health (GIH) with support from our members launched an 18-month initiative to engage funders in the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA). This report highlights key activities and takeaways and previews future programming.

BACKGROUND

The OAA provides critical services that address the social drivers of health such as nutrition, transportation, senior centers, elder rights protections, caregiver support, and health promotion. These services enable older adults to continue contributing to their communities while living safely and comfortably at home. A robust network of nonprofits connects older people to resources throughout the country, including in the most rural and remote communities. However, the need for OAA services has dramatically increased since the act was signed in 1965. The older adult population has grown and become more diverse, the cost of living has increased, and their poverty rate is rising.

OAA reauthorization is a critical opportunity for funders to address common priority issues affecting all of us as we age, including mental health and well-being, social connection, and the care workforce. Through this unique collaboration, GIA and GIH hope to advance equity and eliminate disparities in aging, better align public and private resources, identify bipartisan solutions, and increase funding to meet the growing needs of older people.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Since this collaboration launched, GIA and GIH have worked to galvanize support from health and aging funders for the OAA reauthorization process and engage policymakers around philanthropic priorities to improve OAA implementation. Activities include:

- **January:** Funder Meet Up: Older Americans Act Reauthorization
- **March:** “Policy Recommendations for Older Americans Act Renewal” informed by a political landscape analysis that included interviews and research
- **April:** Advocacy for the Older Americans Act Reauthorization: What Can My 501c3 Foundation Do? virtual workshop
- **May:** ACL-Funder Session on Driving Change through Public-Private Collaboration and Participation in the Hill Day at NCOA Age + Action Conference
- **May:** “The Older Americans Act is Not Keeping Pace with Today’s Older Adults” commentary published in The Well News
- **June:** “Fact Sheet: 5 Ways Congress Can Strengthen the Older Americans Act, and What Philanthropy Can Do”
- **June:** Learning Lab session, Optimizing Health and Well-being Later in Life Through the Older Americans Act and More, at GIH Annual Conference
- **August:** Funder Meetup: Older Americans Act Reauthorization Updates

- **October:** Brian Hofland Policy Session on Medicare, Medicaid, and OAA at GIA Annual Conference
- **Nov-Dec:** Virtual and in-person outreach to legislators on both sides of the aisle urging them to include the OAA in the final spending package.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The first year of work led to a few important developments and takeaways.

- Funders needed capacity-building resources to strengthen their understanding of the OAA and what they could and could not do to support reauthorization. GIH and GIA responded with virtual workshops run by policy and lobbying experts.
- Policymakers and advocates appreciated the philanthropic sector's activation around OAA and were influenced by our perspective. In addition to responding to the bipartisan Senate request for feedback on the draft bill, GIA and GIH have responded to requests for technical assistance from multiple Congressional offices on both sides of the aisle, focusing on OAA reauthorization and other aging-focused legislation.
- Coordination of health care and social services provided by the OAA, Medicare, and Medicaid emerged as an important opportunity for philanthropy and government to collaborate. As a first step, GIA and GIH brought funders together with Administration for Community Living (ACL) leaders to discuss how public and private funding streams might better align to enable older adults to access and navigate available resources that optimize functioning and improve quality of life.
- Our current systems must be adapted to meet the needs of a growing aging population. At the GIH and GIA Annual Conferences, we identified strategies to move us closer to the aspirations of Medicare, Medicaid, and OAA, including taking a more person-centered approach to care, elevating and capitalizing the Aging Services Network, and investing in prevention in later life.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

GIA and GIH will be releasing a white paper examining the interplay of Medicare, Medicaid, and the OAA in the face of profound population changes since their enactment. Informed by the discussions at the above events, the paper will highlight important gaps and shortcomings in critical services that have not kept up with the growth of the aging population, and point to opportunities for funders and grantees to strengthen and expand the system to cover a greater range of people and needs.

With OAA reauthorization still pending, major spending bills upcoming, the 60th anniversary of the OAA, Medicare, and Medicaid and the 90th anniversary of Social Security this summer, this will be a critical time to continue and intensify our efforts. In 2025 and 2026, GIA and GIH will continue to work with our partners and networks to keep philanthropy involved and influential in these policy processes and ensure our common priorities remain at the forefront of the debate. Continued financial support will enable us to build relationships with a new Congress and administration, organize funders and briefings, design cutting-edge policy programming at our respective conferences and meetings, strengthen partnerships with aging-focused organizations, deepen conversations with ACL and other key government agencies, and educate lawmakers about the importance of health and social programs keeping pace with an aging society.



For more information, or to provide financial support, please visit the **GIA** and **GIH** websites.

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