



# AGING SERVICES WORKFORCE NOW!



The population of the United States is rapidly aging. By 2034 there will be more people over age 65 than under age 18. Half of the 10,000 people turning 65 every day in the United States will need paid aging services care and support at some point in their lives.

## LEADINGAGE ADVOCACY

LeadingAge strives to make America a better place to grow old and we resolve to enact meaningful long-term care policies that promote access to quality care for all, wherever they call home. As Americans live longer and outlive their savings, millions need care and support to grow old with health and dignity.

Members of the 117th Congress must act NOW to strengthen our aging services infrastructure to ensure quality services are available to older adults and their families.

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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NOW

### Aging Services Workforce

While the crisis in recruiting and retaining frontline and professional aging services workers is not new, the COVID-19 pandemic made it even more essential that policymakers create and fund programs that recruit, train, and retain workers in the sector. Providers must be funded adequately to increase pay for direct care professionals to at least a living wage. We recommend programs to professionalize the workforce with competency-based training requirements, increased training requirements, and career pathways to advancement opportunities.

- The FY 2023 Appropriations package should:
  - » Build up our workforce through funding for the National Health Care Workforce Commission authorized by the Affordable Care Act.
  - » Bolster wages for dedicated aging services professional caregivers through \$1.6 billion to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to support staffing wage subsidies that deliver tuition assistance, childcare, and transportation assistance.
  - » Invest in the Administration for Community Living Direct Care Workforce Competitive Grants with \$1 billion and the creation of the Direct Care Workforce Technical Assistance Center with \$20 million.
  - » Support a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services study of on-site nursing staff coverage with \$50 million, as specified in the Nursing Home Workforce Training Grants.
  - » Increase our pipeline of prospective workers by funding the Department of HHS and Education to jointly develop and implement an aging services training program for high school students.
  - » Reauthorize and expand grants that train low-income workers for high demand jobs by supporting the Health Profession Opportunity Grants program with \$40 million.
  - » Implement nontraditional apprenticeship programs, including serving individuals with disabilities or nontraditional apprenticeship populations, with \$350 million in funding support.
  - » Direct the Biden Administration to establish an Interagency Aging Services Workforce Taskforce and report on activities to Congress.

## WORKFORCE AND BEYOND: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NOW

### ★ Nursing Homes

We support legislation that modernizes and improves nursing homes so that they can adapt to and flourish in the post-COVID era. Fostering high-quality care in nursing homes and promoting evidence-based outcomes and collaborative approaches to achieve transformational change is critical. We must address the critical need to expand how individuals pay for and receive long-term services and supports.

We support these bills:

- The Building America's Healthcare Workforce Act (H.R. 7744) to get more Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) in nursing homes as quickly as possible.
- The Ensuring Seniors' Access to Quality Care Act (S. 4381), which allows nursing assistants to complete their training on-site rather than having to find nurse aide training programs in their community.
- Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act (H.R. 3650, S. 2048) so that all the nights a Medicare beneficiary stays in the hospital count toward the three-day minimum required for Medicare nursing home coverage.

### ★ Affordable Senior Housing

The shortage of affordable housing damages older adults' ability to age with dignity, choice, and independence. More than 2.2 million very low-income older adult renters spend more than half of their incomes for housing, a number that's grown 68% since 2009. Waiting lists for affordable senior housing are often several years long, stifling efforts to prevent and end the steep rise of homelessness among older adults. Less than half of HUD Section 202 senior housing properties have an on-site Resident Service Coordinator to support residents in accessing services to age in the community.

- **Expand the Supply of Housing:** Congress should include an additional \$600 million for approximately 6,200 new Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly homes.
- **Fund More Service Coordinators:** Provide \$100 million for 400 new, three-year Service Coordinator grants and \$30 million for new budget-based Service Coordinators in HUD-assisted communities.
- **Renew, Preserve, and Improve Housing Infrastructure:** Full renewal funding for Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Section 202 Project Rental Assistance Contracts, and Service Coordinator grants; \$6 million to ensure successful RAD for PRAC conversions; connect HUD multifamily homes to the internet.

- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Priorities:** Congress should pass the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act to expand and improve the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and protect nonprofit ownership, and also support the Healthy Homes Act for service coordination and wellness in Housing Credit communities.

### ★ Care in the Home and Community

We support policies that recognize that whenever possible, individuals choose to receive services at home, in the community. To support individual choice, community-based organizations must be reimbursed adequately and regulated appropriately, ensuring that beneficiaries receive appropriate, high-quality care regardless of the setting or location.

We support these bills:

- The Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA) (S. 4260), which would allow more training of specialized workers to support people with serious illnesses.
- Pass the Better Care Better Jobs Act (S. 2210) or enact the HCBS provisions of H.R. 5376. Any HCBS extension should include a permanent HCBS FMAP bump, include provisions to provide direct pass-throughs for workers, and update Medicaid rates regularly. We want to build on the progress made by the additional HCBS FMAP bump provided by the American Rescue Plan.
- The Choose Home Care Act of 2021 (S.2562, H.R. 5541) would expand the current home health benefit to respond to older adults who want to receive care at home.
- Expand access to telehealth in the home and community by making the telehealth provisions of the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act permanent and also by paying [home health](#) and [PACE](#) providers for the telehealth services they are providing.
- The [PACE Expanded Act](#), which improves access to the PACE program and expands its reach.