LeadingAge Advocacy Goals: Affordable Senior Housing

- Address the severe shortage of affordable senior housing by expanding, preserving, and improving housing assistance for older adults.
- Improve resident outcomes by using affordable housing as a platform to connect residents to services and supports, including by expanding the number of service coordinators and bridging the digital divide.
- Improve processes, requirements, and inspection protocols in federal housing programs to support the operation of high-quality affordable senior housing.

The Issue

There is a severe shortage of affordable housing for older adults with low incomes. Between 2009 and 2019, the number of very low income older adult households spending more than half of their incomes on rent increased by an astonishing 68%. While 47% of all renters are cost-burdened, more than half of older renter households (53% or 4.7 million households) are housing cost-burdened, and almost one in three (30% or 2.6 million households) experience a severe cost burden.

There is a clear racial disproportionality of need for affordable senior housing. Black and Latina/o older renters are also disproportionately rental cost-burdened. High housing cost burdens result in older adults spending half as much as their non-cost-burdened peers on food and healthcare. Meanwhile, the number of older adults experiencing homelessness is rising faster than the nation is aging.

In addition to expanding the supply of housing, we need to preserve and improve existing affordable and accessible housing for older adults. Currently, less than half of properties in HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly have a Service Coordination program. Service Coordinators are crucial to connecting residents with services and supports needed to age in community.

Improving affordable housing options for older adults over the long-term also means increasing accessibility features, improving digital connectivity, and addressing the need for energy and climate resilience throughout federally-assisted rental housing.

2023 Affordable Senior Housing Priorities

Secure robust Fiscal Year 2024 HUD appropriations funding:

- **Expand access to affordable senior housing.**
  - Provide $600 million for new capital advances and operating assistance, including service coordination, for approximately 6,200 new Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly homes nationwide, including in rural areas.
  - Allow capital advances for new Section 202 properties to be paired with project-based Section 8 operating subsidy.
  - Provide $50 million for about 5,000 new Older Adult Special Purpose Vouchers, at least 50% of which could be project-based.

- **Preserve and improve HUD-assisted housing.**
  - Provide full funding for Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) and Project Rental Assistance Contract (PRAC) renewals, including funding that reflects increased costs for insurance, staffing, utilities, service coordination, and internet connectivity.
  - Expand ongoing budget adjustment options for Section 202/PRAC properties, including by implementing market-driven adjustments option such, as Operating Cost Adjustment Factors (OCAFs).

- **Ensure RAD for PRAC success.**
  - Allow converted RAD for PRACs to access a Rent Comparability Study (RCS) every five years, in addition to annual OCAFs, and adjust initial rent-setting to improve financial viability of the converted property.
  - Provide $10 million for RAD for PRAC conversion subsidy to ensure the successful and long-term preservation of 202/PRAC homes.

- **Connect HUD-assisted residents to the services and supports they need to age in the community.**
  - Provide $125 million for the renewal of existing service coordinator grants.
  - Provide $100 million for 400 new, three-year service coordinator grants and expand eligibility to 202/PRAC communities.
  - Provide a $31 million increase for new, budget-based service coordinators.
  - Further improve the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program to allow for whole-building eligibility and enrollment for HUD-assisted communities.
  - Expand resources to install building-wide internet in HUD-assisted communities.
- **Oppose cuts and flat-funding (which is tantamount to a cut) for HUD housing programs.**

Expand and improve the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program.
- Enact the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (AHCIA) to:
- Increase state Housing Credit allocations by 50%.
- Fix Right of First Refusal issues that continue to rob nonprofit housing providers of their housing credit-financed developments.
- Lower the threshold of Private Activity Bond financing required to trigger the maximum amount of 4% Housing Credits from 50% to 25%.
- Enable the Housing Credit to better serve households with extremely low incomes.
- Enact solutions to bring service coordinators to housing credit communities.

Prevent and end homelessness among older adults.
- Fully fund HUD's homeless assistance programs.
- Improve data collection on homelessness among older adults.
- Improve partnerships between Continuums of Care and Area Agencies on Aging.

Support efforts to improve accessibility of the nation's housing stock.
- Ensure HUD's Older Adult Home Modification Program serves renters and homeowners.
- Expand resources to increase the accessibility of the nation's housing stock.
- Support legislation that requires universal design and visitability.