

FY 2012 “Megabus” Funding Bill Enacted

December 19, 2011

At the end of last week, Congress took several votes to approve a final package of spending bills (H.R. 2055) for FY 2012. The nine bills included in the so-called “megabus” would provide about \$915 billion in discretionary spending. In order to allow time for the comprehensive spending bill to be sent to the president, Congress passed a six-day stopgap continuing resolution to keep the government financed through Dec. 23. Under the bill, Labor-HHS-Education programs are funded at \$156.3 billion, \$7 million less than FY 2011 and \$13.6 billion less than the President’s request.

Older Americans Act Funding Highlights

The news for the Older Americans Act (OAA) in the Labor/HHS portion of the bill is very good overall. House and Senate appropriators held the line against any major cuts, choosing instead to level fund every core OAA line item: III B Supportive Services, III C Nutrition, III E National Family Caregiver, Title VI Native American aging programs, and Title VII elder abuse prevention. (See n4a’s appropriations chart for details: attached)

n4a is disappointed that the Administration’s proposal to transfer the State Health Insurance Assistance and Information Program (SHIP) from CMS to AoA was not agreed to, as the Senate committee had supported in its report language. n4a, which has long fought for increased funding for SHIPs as well as to AAAs that do not receive SHIP funding, had advocated heavily in support of this request.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) received about \$6.5 million in discretionary funding. This is in addition to the \$50 million mandatory funding over five years, which n4a worked hard to include in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). n4a advocated for these resources and is pleased to see that Congress has provided this additional funding to ADRCs in a very tight budget year.

Unfortunately, the conferees’ decided not to fund Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) activities through AoA at \$10 million, as the Senate had recommended, under the CDC’s mandatory funding from the ACA’s Prevention and Public Health Fund. While this is a setback in finding additional funding sources for the Aging Network’s evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention efforts, it is emblematic of larger threats to funding for prevention services in this Congress.

The conferees also chose not to move OAA's Title V (the Senior Community Service Employment Program) from the Department of Labor to AoA, as the Administration proposed in its budget. Although Title V suffered a devastating cut in FY 2011, it was left alone this year and level funded like the other core OAA programs.

As expected, the news is not all good. The Administration's Caregiver Initiative was not funded (all the programs within it were level funded instead), and first-time funding for Adult Protective Services at AoA as was requested by the President was not included. In addition, in an alarming move the Title IV Aging Research and Training Program was zeroed out from AoA's budget. Aging Network Activities under Title II also received a significant cut in funding of 76 percent. n4a is greatly concerned about these cuts and how they will negatively affect AoA's ability to develop new and innovative aging programs and support capacity building efforts, and will advocate to reinstate funding for these programs next year. However, this did not affect funding Senior Medicare Patrol programs, which were level funded under a separate line item. And finally, the Alzheimer's Initiative was cut by 65 percent as proposed by the Senate committee.

For more information about these and other federal aging policy issues, please contact n4a's public policy and legislative affairs staff: Amy E. Gotwals (agotwals@n4a.org) and K.J. Hertz (khertz@n4a.org), 202.872.0888.