



The Jewish Federations
OF NORTH AMERICA



AJFCA
Association of
Jewish Family
& Children's Agencies

OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA)

OAA Reauthorization

Reauthorize the Older Americans Act with sufficient funding to meet the needs of seniors.

The Jewish community is aging rapidly, with more than 20% of American Jews already over the age of 65. The fastest growing demographic within the Jewish community is those over the age of 85. The Older Americans Act (OAA) improves the quality of life for seniors in need, and OAA funds pay for many home and community-based services through Jewish Family Service agencies, Jewish Vocational Service agencies and Jewish Community Centers throughout the country. Jewish organizations provide services such as adult day care, case management, congregate and home-delivered meals, elder abuse prevention and intervention, family caregiver support, home care, legal conservatorship, support groups, and transportation.

Priorities for Reauthorization:

- **Holocaust Survivors (H.R. 2786 and S. 3358):** Aging Holocaust survivors have needs similar to those of other older Americans, but the consequences of premature or unnecessary institutionalization can be more severe for Holocaust survivors. Reports have indicated that the sights, sounds, and smells of institutionalization, such as showers, can trigger psychological effects of experiences from the Holocaust. The Older Americans Act can help ensure that Holocaust survivors are able to remain in their homes for as long as possible.
- **Meals and Nutrition (S. 3358):** Congregate and home-delivered meals allow the elderly to avoid hospitalization and premature institutionalization by providing nutrition and regular home visits. The OAA nutrition section should include language highlighting the need for the provision and funding of special meals stemming from a religious or ethnic requirement or health-related concern.
- **Community Innovations for Aging in Place (CIAIP):** CIAIP helps the country's Aging Service Network to develop and carry out model demonstration projects that promote aging in place for older individuals including such individuals who reside in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities.
- **Caregiver Support:** Approximately 44 million Americans provide an estimated \$375 billion per year in unpaid care to a family member or friend with an illness, frailty, or disability. While caregiving can be a fulfilling experience, many caregivers pay a high price physically, socially, emotionally, and financially. The OAA should strengthen the National Family Caregiver Support program by increasing its authorization to \$250 million per year; and by allowing agencies to service older adults who are providing care to adult children with disabilities.

Holocaust Survivor Assistance Act – H.R. 2786

H.R. 2786 amends the Older Americans Act to assist Holocaust survivors to age in place in their communities with dignity and comfort. The bipartisan bill is sponsored by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL). H.R. 2786 includes the following:

- Adds Holocaust survivors to the list of groups considered “greatest social need” for services under the Older Americans Act
- Designates a person within the Administration on Aging to have responsibility for implementing services to Holocaust survivors
- Creates a demonstration grant program within the OAA to increase and improve transportation services, which is one of the greatest needs among older adults

Responding to Urgent needs of Survivors of the Holocaust (RUSH) Act – S. 3358

S. 3358 includes all of the provisions of H.R. 2786 plus additional changes to the Nutrition Section of the Older Americans Act. The bipartisan bill is sponsored by Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD). The amendments to the nutrition section include the following:

- To provide meals that meet dietary requirements based on religious, cultural, or ethnic requirements to the maximum extent practicable
- To encourage people who deliver food to homebound seniors to engage in conversation and be aware of the warning signs of medical emergencies, injury or abuse
- To analyze service providers’ abilities to obtain viable contracts for special foods required by religious requirement, required dietary need, or ethnic consideration, to the extent data are available

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The Jewish Federations of North America represents 157 Jewish Federations and 300 Network communities, which raise and distribute more than \$3 billion annually for social welfare, social services and educational needs. The Federation movement, collectively among the top 10 charities on the continent, protects and enhances the well-being of Jews worldwide through the values of tikkun olam (repairing the world), tzedakah (charity and social justice) and Torah (Jewish learning).

AJFCA is the membership association for approximately 125 Jewish family service agencies across the United States and Canada. Ranging in size from small departments of local Jewish federations to some of the largest human services agencies in North America, our members provide vital services to clients of all ages, faiths and economic backgrounds. They counsel families, feed the hungry, assist the elderly and protect the vulnerable.