THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT
Supporting independence, health and well-being for our nation’s seniors

OAA OVERVIEW
For more than 50 years, the Older Americans Act (OAA) has provided critical social and nutrition services for seniors aged 60 and older, as well as their caregivers. OAA services and supports allow our nation’s most vulnerable seniors to remain healthier and independent at home, out of hospitals and nursing homes. Some services include:

- Home-delivered meals and congregate meals served in group settings such as senior centers
- Transportation
- In-home personal care and community supports
- Caregiver assistance
- Evidence-based health and wellness programs
- Employment services and training
- Legal and protective services, including ombudsman protections in nursing homes

In 2015, nearly 11 million seniors received OAA services, including 222 million meals and 24 million rides.

THE ISSUE
An unprecedented demographic shift is occurring as the Baby Boomer generation ages. Compared with over 46 million seniors today, by 2030, 70 million people – 1 in 5 Americans – will be 65 or older. Millions of older Americans face economic and health challenges and rely on OAA services.

Today, nearly 90% of seniors have at least one chronic health condition, 18 million live in or near poverty, and nearly 10 million seniors face the threat of hunger. As the senior population continues to grow, these numbers will only increase if left unaddressed.

SENIORS 65+ AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WILL GROW FROM 15% IN 2014 TO 22% IN 2040.
Despite the efficiencies and successes of the OAA, its funding has barely budged since 2004 and is rapidly shrinking relative to rising need. For example, a Government Accountability Office report found that about 83% of food insecure seniors and 83% of physically impaired seniors did not receive meals but likely needed them. This lack of adequate funding threatens programs and services that are critical to the health and economic well-being of older Americans.

THE GROWING GAP BETWEEN SENIORS IN NEED AND SENIORS SERVED BY THE OAA

Despite the efficiencies and successes of the OAA, its funding has barely budged since 2004 and is rapidly shrinking relative to rising need. For example, a Government Accountability Office report found that about 83% of food insecure seniors and 83% of physically impaired seniors did not receive meals but likely needed them. This lack of adequate funding threatens programs and services that are critical to the health and economic well-being of older Americans.

HERE’S WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO

OAA programs represent 1/20 of 1% of the entire federal budget. Given our nation’s demographic and economic realities, we must work to strengthen the health and financial security of older adults by:

1. Increasing funding for all OAA programs in FY 2019 and beyond
2. Ending sequestration and replacing it with a bipartisan budget plan

LCAO is a coalition of 70 national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America’s older population. We provide a voice for seniors and their families in the ongoing national debate on aging policy. We work to raise awareness of issues facing the senior population, secure policy changes where needed, and promote dialogue with leaders in the public and private sectors.