



## National Indian Council on Aging

10501 Montgomery Blvd. NE, Suite 210, Albuquerque, NM 87111

Telephone 505-292-2001 Fax 505-292-1922

<http://www.nicoa.org>

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### Appropriation Recommendations for 2008

For fiscal year 2008, all recommendations relate to the Older Americans Act (OAA, Public Law 89-73 as amended) since this legislation provides the primary authority for funding services to elders in Indian country.

#### **Priority 1: Title VI, Aging Grants to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations, including Part C, Native American Caregiver Support Program and funding for training of Title VI service providers from funds other than those appropriated for Title VI programs.**

Funds for grants to Indian tribes have a history of being well spent and at the same time being woefully inadequate. At stake is the dignity and quality of life for a segment of the American population that is sorely in need of assistance.

The Older American Act specifically states "it is the purpose of this Title to promote the delivery of supportive services, including nutrition services, to American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians that are comparable to services provided under Title III (grants for state and community programs on aging). The provision of "comparable services," however, has not been achievable due to insufficient funds for this entitlement.

Approximately 2/3 of the grants to Indian tribes or consortia of tribes are for less than \$100,000. This funding level is expected to provide services for a minimum of 50 elders for an entire year. Those tribes receiving \$100,000 serve between 200 and 300 elders. Many tribes are unable to meet the five days a week meal requirement because of insufficient funding and are serving congregate meals only two or three days per week. Tribes are also reducing home delivered meals because of the sharp increase in gasoline prices.

Indians comprise the most economically disadvantaged elderly minority in the nation. Even so, their needs for in-home and community-based services are not available through Title VI programs, although funding for these services is provided to other populations through Title III. Some Title VI programs are forced to close for several days each week, unable to provide basic services such as transportation, information

and referral, legal assistance, ombudsman, respite or adult day care, home telephone visits, homemaker services, or home health aide service. Recent gasoline price increases also severely reduces the ability of Title VI service providers to provide home delivered meals and related supportive services to home bound Indian elders. Additionally, the Administration on Aging takes a percentage of the Title VI funding off the top to fund training for Title VI staff.

We recommend that the training, which is critical to have skilled personnel working with Indian elders, have its own line item under Title IV and adequate funding in order to ensure the maximum amount of resources are still available to support nutrition and other supportive services for Indian elders.

Funding for the Native American Caregiver program is inadequate in two respects. The grant amount provided to particular tribes is often so low to make it impractical to plan and implement adequate caregiver programs in the tribes. Also, there is practically no training to tribes to use caregiver funds effectively.

We recommend an increase from the FY 2007 funding of \$26.1 million (Part A and B) to \$27.5 million for FY 2008, an incremental increase of 5.24%<sup>1</sup>; and, \$700,000 million as a specific line item under Title IV for training of Title VI service providers.

#### **Title VI, Part A and B**

Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration on Aging

Aging grants to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations

The Committee recognizes this program as the primary vehicle for providing nutrition and other supportive services to Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian elders and provides \$27.5 million for this purpose.

#### **Title VI, Part C**

Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration on Aging

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<sup>1</sup> 5.24 percent was derived using compounding of projected 2008 Consumer Price Index of 2.19 percent and projected 2008 population growth of 2.98 percent.

## Native American Caregiver Support Program

Congress recognized the need for caregiving in Indian Country in the 2006 Older Americans Act amendments and authorized \$6,800,000 in FY 2008 for this purpose. The Committee also recommends this amount for training for tribal recipients of these funds to plan and implement effective caregiving programs.

## **Training for Title VI Service Providers**

Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration on Aging

Aging research and training

The Committee recognizes the need to provide training for Title VI service providers as required by the Older Americans Act and provides \$700,000 in Title IV specifically for this purpose.

## **Priority 2: Title VII—Allotments for Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection Activities, specifically, Subtitle B-Native American Organization Provisions.**

Subtitle B of Title VII of the Older Americans Act authorizes a program for tribes, public agencies, or nonprofit organizations serving Indian elders to assist in prioritizing issues relating to elder rights and to carry out activities in support of these priorities. Funds have never been appropriated for this purpose while funds for States have been funded at more than \$20 million per year. State programs seldom reach Indian elders due to cultural and geographic barriers. Indian tribes have little or no access to the agencies, departments, ombudsman, or other programs that are available to states. Further, tribes have no additional source of mandated federal funding for elder protection activities. Anecdotal evidence provided by those involved with elder services in Indian country suggests a high incidence of elder abuse in Indian country. It is commonly acknowledged that “abusers” are often family members that elders often do not know they are being abused and if they do know, they are reluctant to disclose this information. Outreach and demonstration programs are needed to increase awareness of elder abuse and to help tribes devise ways to minimize abusive behavior.

We recommend a demonstration grant program directed to Indian country in the amount of \$1,000,000 to begin to address this very serious issue.

Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration on Aging

Ombudsman/elder abuse

In addition to the funds provided for ombudsman and elder abuse programs for states, the Committee provides \$1,000,000 for a demonstration grant program in support of the activities authorized under Title VII, Subtitle B of the Older Americans Act for programs directed to preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older individuals in Indian Country. Funds will be used for education programs directed toward increasing awareness of elder abuse in Indian Country and on developing enforceable codes at the tribal level.

**Priority 3: Title V, Senior Community Service Employment Program, maintain funding levels of prior years and ensure qualified Indian elders are served by a National Indian aging organization.**

Through this program, NICOA seeks to train older workers for unsubsidized employment while providing workers in support of community/tribe based organizations. Of the \$440 million appropriated for this program in 2006, NICOA competed for and received approximately \$5.1 million to operate programs directed primarily at low income, Indian seniors. In many ways the problems associated with this program is not the level of funding but the regulations established to qualify Indian seniors and the locations NICOA is permitted to operate this community service/employment training program. These regulations make it difficult to serve those Indian elders and communities most in need. Also, since a large part of the success measures of this program is placement of enrollees in unsubsidized employment, the high unemployment rates often found in Indian country frequently makes compliance with mainstream success standards extremely difficult.

We recommend continued funding and language to ensure that qualified Indian elders are served by a national Indian organization with experience with employment and training programs for Indian Country.

Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008

Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration

## Community Service Employment for Older Americans

The Committee recommends the same level of funding as in fiscal year 2007 and urges the Secretary to ensure that Indian elders located in high unemployment communities are fully served by a national Indian organization with experience in serving Indian elders and that placement rate standards are established to reflect the unemployment situation in Indian country.

### **Priority 4: Title IV, Grant funding to Promote Health and Wellness among Indian Elders.**

NICOA, along with other national minority aging organizations, received a grant to promote health and wellness among Indian elders. While the grant amount of approximately \$130,000 received in 2005 is not adequate to reach out to all of Indian country, continuation is warranted since this is the only source of federal funds in support of improved access to services by Indian elders.

We recommend the following:

Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration on Aging

Aging research and training

The Committee is aware of the need to improve access to social services at the federal, state, and tribal levels by elders in Indian Country and is also aware of the high incidence of chronic diseases among Indian elders and recommends continued funding for the National Indian Council on Aging at \$150,000.

### **Priority 5: Title IV, Grant funding to Improve Indian Elder Access to Health and Social Programs.**

Through its previous demonstration project piloted in Washington State and funded in FY 2004, NICOA has developed evidence that employing Tribal community members to counsel Elders is an effective strategy for connecting Elders to outside social, health and financial services they desperately need but often fail to receive. Based on the feedback from Tribes nationwide that have heard about the program, NICOA requests the continuation of the project to other parts of Indian country.

We recommend the following:

Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related  
Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration on Aging

Aging research and training

The Committee is aware of the need to improve access to health and social services at the federal, state, and tribal levels by elders in Indian Country and recommends funding for the National Indian Council on Aging at \$1,000,000.

For additional information about these recommended appropriations for FY 2008, please contact Chauncey Ching, NICOA's Washington, DC Liaison, via cell phone at 202-269-6619 or email at [cc@cching.com](mailto:cc@cching.com). You may also contact Traci L. McClellan, NICOA's Executive Director, via cell phone at 502-263-9696 or email at [traci@nicoa.org](mailto:traci@nicoa.org).