

# Diverse Elders and the Older Americans Act



## What is the Older Americans Act?

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is a critical piece of legislation that helps older adults stay as independent as possible as they age. The OAA helps fund senior nutrition programs, caregiver support, employment training, elder abuse prevention, and more. Additionally, states are required under the OAA to give service preference to older adults with the greatest economic and social need, including those who are low-income and/or face language barriers.

## Why is the OAA important to diverse elders?

Diverse older adults may experience severe social isolation for many reasons: living in rural areas, limited English proficiency, fears around immigration and deportation, being disowned by families of origin, and/or discrimination. Our communities also face high rates of poverty and unemployment.

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*“There are few safe havens for tribal Elders, and one of them is the Senior Center. When funds are decreased for senior programs, then these are closed or used for something else and the senior is forgotten.” – Vivian, South Carolina*

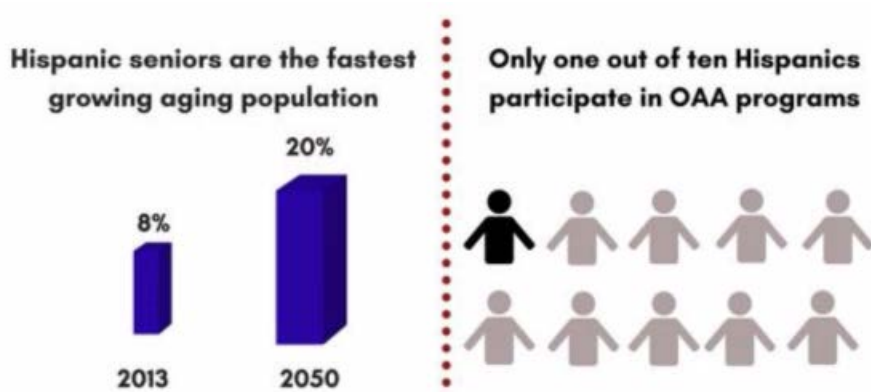
*“I could give many examples of neglect, fraud, and elder abuse in my community. I know how hard it can be for elder LGBT folk to find a place to share a meal and have conversations that matter. Please keep the programs going.” – Charles, Maine*

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*Comments received during our recent civic engagement campaign (<http://bit.ly/DECCivicEngagement>)*

## For diverse elders, services provided by the Older Americans Act are lifesaving.

But not enough diverse elders have consistent access to or understanding of these services. More support – not cuts – is essential to ensure that diverse aging populations are reached by these programs.



## What do budget cuts mean for the OAA?

The Trump administration has proposed an 18% budget cut, or \$15.1 billion, to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which oversees Older Americans Act programs and services. Funding cuts to these critical programs may mean **less outreach to our communities, reduced in-language support**, and ultimately, **fewer diverse elders receiving the critical services they need to age with health and dignity.**