



ACT FOR OLDER ADULTS

OLDER LIVES ARE **NOT** EXPENDABLE

The Act for Older Adults action campaign is framed by LeadingAge's five essential actions to fortify the nation's aging services system to address the COVID-19 crisis head on.

Act for Older Adults' goals are to assure providers have ample PPE and rapid response testing to do their jobs, that states consider the health and safety of older persons as they reopen, that aging services across the continuum of care are funded adequately, and that frontline workers, who are risking their lives to serve older people, receive pandemic pay, paid sick leave and healthcare coverage.

Aging services encompasses the entire spectrum of where older people live and the services they need, to live full, engaged lives. Where older persons live includes affordable housing and market-rate housing, continuing care retirement communities/life plan communities, nursing homes, and assisted living. The services they need range from meals and activities to assistance with the very basic needs of daily living – home and community based services, PACE programs, adult day centers. Where older persons live evolves with the services they need, but COVID-19 demands additional response to immediate needs.

Top among the LeadingAge requests to Congress for the next COVID-19 relief package are:

1. \$100 Billion fund to cover costs for PPE, supplies, staffing, treating COVID-19 residents, current and future lost revenue, for all aging services providers including providers compensated through Medicare, Medicaid and by private payers.
2. \$1.2 Billion fund for affordable senior housing, to cover COVID-19 related costs, Service Coordinators, and wireless internet to combat social isolation and link to telehealth.
3. \$10 Billion fund to cover testing of staff, including ancillary costs such as additional staff to cover for staff who test positive. Separately, Congress must ensure that public and private insurance fully cover multiple tests necessary for older persons.
4. Allow home health agencies to be compensated for telehealth visits and for verbal orders for eligibility and billing for the duration of the pandemic to address the difficulty providers have obtaining signed orders.
5. Strengthen and provide additional funding to Medicaid and other existing programs, and to new programs, such as the Paycheck Protection Program, to ensure that older people and the providers who serve them are able to receive the care and services they need to get through the coronavirus pandemic.
6. Create a bipartisan Congressional Commission on the Future of Aging Services to identify the longstanding gaps in aging and long-term care services and develop actionable steps to better serve older Americans and prevent the losses experienced in the pandemic.