



## Beating COVID and Saving Older Americans

### LeadingAge Policy Positions

For over a year, as COVID-19 raged out of control, aging services providers have been fighting to protect older adults and workers with too little support. They need urgent relief in the form of more testing, PPE, staffing support and funding to protect older Americans and their care workers who have suffered most from the coronavirus.

LeadingAge is committed to working with the new administration and Congress to defeat COVID by preventing new cases, identifying and limiting spread of the virus, ensuring staff is at the ready for caregiving and other vital services, funding pandemic-related costs, and supporting older Americans living in affordable housing and in the wider community.

#### Preventing New Cases

- **Vaccines:** Support a fully funded, coordinated vaccination program to deliver vaccines to all recipients and providers of aging and long-term services and supports across residential and non-residential settings.

#### Identifying and Limiting Spread of the Virus

- **Testing:** Support a fully funded, coordinated national testing program that covers all recipients (regardless of where they live) and providers of aging services. The program should include provisions for testing supplies, PPE, and staff time for testing, record-keeping and reporting.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Ensure that PPE manufacturing keeps up with need, that PPE in the national and state stockpiles is distributed, and that funds are provided to pay for PPE. There are still shortages of certain PPE items for aging services organizations, and the cost of PPE is far beyond anticipated budgets.

#### Supporting Staff is at the Ready for Caring and Other Vital Services

- **Staffing:** Provide targeted funds to increase worker wages for frontline staff in nursing homes, one of the most dangerous workplaces, and in all aging services settings.

The historical workforce challenges in aging services have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Workers on the front line are exhausted and need support. Providers are grappling with extraordinarily high costs of short term staffing to cover gaps when staff are sick or need to isolate.

#### Funding Pandemic-Related Costs

- **Financing:** Providers are facing ongoing costs for supplies, temporary staff, infrastructure, and other necessary expenses to fight and recover from the pandemic. So they can survive and recover, we ask for continued support through loan, grant, and financing mechanisms enabled by earlier legislation. These include more Paycheck Protection Program funds with expanded eligibility, more Provider Relief Funds, and a continuation of the Medicare sequester moratorium.
- **Additional Funds for States to Support Aging Services:** Support additional funding for states with requirements that they spend a set percentage on aging services. Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) or other allocations should also be used to ensure the continuation of needed aging services infrastructure.

#### Supporting Older Americans Living in the Community

- **Home and Community Based Services (HCBS):** Funding for home health, hospice, adult day services, meal programs and other community services that have been financially strapped as a result of the pandemic. Now-shuttered adult day and other HCBS programs can serve older adults aging in place and provide respite to family members caring for them.
- **Affordable Senior Housing:** Funding for services, staffing, cleaning and disinfecting, service coordination, and wireless internet to help the more than 2.2 million older adults who live in federally subsidized apartment buildings, which need help beyond rental assistance to survive the pandemic.

In December, LeadingAge sent the Biden transition team [nearly four dozen recommended policy actions](#) for its first 30 days, 100 days, and first year. See the LeadingAge website for all the latest information on our [policy priorities](#).

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