

How Does the President's Proposed 2018 Federal Budget Treat Older People?

At the end of May the Trump Administration released a detailed proposal for the 2018 Federal Budget. Across the board, the proposal would cut and eliminate programs that make up the fabric of aging services and are lifelines for many older Americans.

The cumulative impact of the President's budget on the health and economic security of older people would be devastating. Here is a summary of his proposals:

Medicaid The President proposes to cut Medicaid by \$627 billion over 10 years. **This is on top of the \$839 billion proposed cut in the House of Representatives' proposal to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Taken together, this would mean almost \$1.3 trillion in Medicaid cuts over 10 years – slashing Medicaid nearly in half over the next decade.** Nearly 7 million low-income older Americans rely on Medicaid for their health and long-term care.

Social Security The President's budget would slash Social Security by over \$72 billion, **reducing benefits provided through Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and cutting billions from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.** These cuts would threaten the survival of low-income seniors and people with disabilities who depend on SSDI and SSI to pay for housing, food, and other essentials.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) The proposed budget eliminates the nation's only job training and placement program specifically for older adults. Last year under SCSEP, 70,000 older people received on-the-job training while providing nearly 36 million hours of staff support to 30,000 organizations.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP, known as HICAP in California) The proposed budget eliminates funding for SHIP, a program that each year supports 15,000+ counselors who provide free, state-specific assistance to over 6 million beneficiaries.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) The President would eliminate this program that helps low-income individuals pay for their heating and cooling costs. About a third of the 6.8 million households receiving LIHEAP benefits include an older adult aged 60+.

Block Grants The President's proposal would eliminate the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). These programs provide states and local governments with funding to improve economic security and independence for low-income families and seniors. SSBG is the only source of federal funding for Adult Protective Services. An estimated 4.4 million older Americans receive services under SSBG and CSBG.

Senior Corps & AmeriCorps The President's budget proposal eliminates both of these national service programs that enlist older people in volunteerism and serve seniors in communities nationwide.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps, or CalFresh in California) Federal SNAP funding would be cut by \$194 billion over 10 years. The budget also shifts more funding responsibilities to the states and erodes policies that streamline access for seniors and people with disabilities. Almost 5 million seniors rely on SNAP benefits to afford food.

CDC Falls Prevention The President proposes to eliminate the Center for Disease Control's Falls Prevention program – a loss of \$2 million – while retaining the \$5 million in falls prevention funding in the Administration for Community Living. Every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall; every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall-related injury.

Chronic Disease Self-Management Education The President's budget cuts federal funding for chronic disease self-management training from \$8 million to \$5 million, or 37.5%. Over 90% of older Americans have at least one chronic disease and two-thirds have two or more.

Older Americans Act Programs The President's budget proposal leaves funding for Supportive Services and Senior Centers at 2016 levels (reversing the small increase in 2017). **The President's budget would cut funding for Congregate Nutrition, Meals On Wheels, and Family Caregiver Support.**

Elder Justice Act The President's budget proposal reverses the modest FY17 increase for Adult Protective Services and the Elder Justice Initiative, bringing them back to 2016 funding levels.

What happens next?

The FY17 budget expires on Sept. 30, so the clock is ticking for Congress to adopt a new budget by then. Over the summer the House will write its own budget version, which is likely to include many of the President's proposals. Then the Senate will take up the draft. **Congress has a poor track record when it comes to championing the needs of older Americans, so we remain deeply concerned about the future of aging services.**