

## **President Signs \$1.9 Trillion Relief Bill into Law**

Early in the morning on March 6, 2021, the Senate passed the American Rescue Plan Act by a vote of 50-49 along party lines. **Thanks to those who made contacts to U.S. Senators Johnson and Baldwin on March 5<sup>th</sup>, the amendment proposed by U.S. Senator Johnson, which would have significantly reduced Older Americans Act (OAA) relief funding in the federal relief package, never made it to the Senate floor for a vote.**

The Senate did make some changes to the initial House-passed bill (including moving \$10 million from the OAA Title III B Supportive Services Funding to create a national technical assistance center for grandparents raising grandchildren and kinship caregivers at the Administration for Community Living [ACL]), so the legislation had to move back to the House of Representatives for final approval. The House approved the new Senate version of the bill on March 10<sup>th</sup> and President Biden signed the legislation into law on March 11<sup>th</sup>, days before federally funded unemployment benefits were set to expire.

Thanks to grassroots efforts at the state level and the hard work of our national partners, **the American Rescue Plan Act contains much needed emergency relief funding for Older Americans Act programs**, Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers (10% increase), Adult Protective Services and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and state and local government aid. Details of the OAA funding include:

### Older Americans Act

- \$460 million for Supportive Services (Title III B), which will be used for continuing traditional III B services, supporting and facilitating vaccinations for older adults, and additional activities to mitigate the risks of prolonged social isolation and loneliness among older adults,
- \$750 million for Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services (Title III C),
- \$25 million for Native American Nutrition, Supportive and Caregiver Services (Title VI, Parts A and C),
- \$44 million for Evidence-Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Title III D),
- \$145 million for National Family Caregiver Support Program (Title III E), and
- \$10 million for Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The additional OAA funding is designed to replenish extinguished CARES Act funds, so that dangerous service cliffs can be avoided or, in cases where funding has already lapsed, service gaps restored amidst the ongoing pandemic. The budget process used to pass this bill means that the OAA funding in the American Rescue Plan Act will not need to be spent within one fiscal year, as it is not appropriated

funding, but rather direct funding. More details about what flexibilities states, counties, and Title VI Native American Aging programs will have with this new funding will be shared when available.

There are many other provisions in the relief package that may affect older adults, caregivers, and your agencies. For example, many caregivers who claim their adult care recipient as a dependent may be eligible to receive a \$1,400 stimulus check for that person, in addition to their own (assuming the household is below the income limits). Additional funding details will be provided as they become available.