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U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2020

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HHS Announces Nearly \$1 Billion in CARES Act Grants to Support Older Adults and People with Disabilities in the Community During the COVID-19 Emergency

Today, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is announcing \$955 million in grants from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to help meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities as communities implement measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The grants will fund home-delivered meals; care services in the home; respite care and other support to families and caregivers; information about and referral to supports; and more.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act provides supplemental funding for programs authorized by the Older Americans Act of 1965 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Through these programs, a network of community-based organizations, such as Area Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, senior centers, faith-based organizations, and other non-profits provide a vast array of resources and services to help older adults and people with disabilities stay healthy and live independently in their communities across the United States.

The need for these services has increased as community measures to slow transmission of COVID-19 have closed locations where many people typically receive services and made it difficult for families to assist loved ones who live alone. In addition, the adaptations necessary to provide these services in the current environment have increased costs to service providers.

“This nearly \$1 billion in new funds will help communities support older adults and people of all ages with disabilities in staying healthy, safe, and independent during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. “The new funding secured by President Trump from Congress is a historic boost to programs that support community living for all people, representing an increase of over 40 percent in this year’s funding for ACL’s programs. The aging and disability networks supported by these programs are

delivering meals, ensuring safe transitions home following hospitalizations, and providing other essential services to older Americans and Americans with disabilities during this challenging time, and HHS will continue supporting these partners and the Americans they serve throughout this crisis.”

The CARES Act funding includes:

- \$200 million for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), which will help greater numbers of older adults shelter in place to minimize their exposure to COVID-19. These include personal care assistance; help with household chores and grocery shopping; transportation to essential services (such as grocery stores, banks, or doctors) when necessary; and case management.
- \$480 million for home-delivered meals for older adults. With this funding, states can also expand “drive-through” or “grab-and-go” meals for older adults who typically would participate in meal programs at community centers and other locations that have been closed due to social distancing measures.
- \$85 million for Centers for Independent Living to provide direct and immediate support and services to individuals with disabilities who are experiencing disruptions to their independent, community-based living due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Services will ensure individuals with disabilities have the supports they need to safely stay in their homes or return home after a hospitalization or institutionalization during (and directly after) COVID-19.
- \$20 million for nutrition and related services for Native American Programs to help tribes and tribal organizations provide meals and supportive services directly to Native American elders.
- \$100 million for the National Family Caregiver Support Program to expand a range of services that help family and informal caregivers provide support for their loved ones at home. These include counseling, respite care, training, and connecting people to information.
- \$20 million to support State Long-term Care Ombudsman programs in providing consumer advocacy services for residents of long-term care facilities across the country. Restrictions on visitation have significantly increased demand for ombudsman services, as families seek assistance in ensuring the well-being of their loved ones. Ombudsman programs will seek to expand their virtual presence to residents and their families, and continue to promote the health, safety welfare, and rights of residents in the context of COVID-19. This funding will give Ombudsman programs the flexibility to hire additional staff and purchase additional technology, associated hardware, and personal protective equipment once in-person visits resume.
- \$50 million for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), which will fund programs that both connect people at greatest risk to COVID-19 to services needed to practice social distancing and seek to mitigate issues created by it, such as social isolation. ADRCs across the country are reporting

unprecedented demand for assistance with applications for services, care coordination, services that support people in returning home following hospitalization, and the like.

“Area Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, and other community-based organizations are working hard to expand capacity to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities during this extraordinary time,” said ACL Administrator Lance Robertson. “These additional funds will allow for an incredible response at the state and local level to meet the needs of people who are facing some of the greatest risks during the COVID-19 emergency.”

The majority of these additional funds (\$905 million) are being awarded today to states, territories, and tribes for subsequent allocation to local service providers. Grant amounts are determined based on the formulas defined under the program authorizing statutes. The remaining \$50 million will be awarded by the close of April.

Older adults who need assistance can contact the Eldercare Locator to find services available in their community. The Eldercare Locator can be reached at 1-800-677-1116 or <https://eldercare.acl.gov/>.

People with disabilities can locate their local Center for Independent Living at <https://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>. In addition, the Eldercare Locator can help people with disabilities find their local Aging and Disability Resource Center.

For more information about COVID-19, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

About the Administration for Community Living

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) was created around the fundamental principle that older adults and people of all ages with disabilities should be able to live where they choose, with the people they choose, and with the ability to participate fully in their communities.

By funding services and supports provided by networks of community-based organizations, and with investments in research, education, and innovation, ACL helps make this principle a reality for millions of Americans. For more information about ACL’s programs, please visit [ACL.gov](https://www.acl.gov).

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Last revised: April 21, 2020