



FACT SHEET

How Trump's FY 2019 Budget Hurts Older Americans

By Katherine Gallagher Robbins and Leonard Scott IV February 16, 2018

President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2019 budget¹ is poised to wreak havoc on older Americans—increasing hunger, reducing economic security, increasing the potential for elder abuse, and reducing employment and volunteer opportunities to pay for the \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts² provided for corporations and millionaires in the December tax bill. Here are just a few examples of the myriad ways in which President Trump's budget harms older Americans.

- **Slashing health care:** Medicaid is a lifeline for millions of seniors and pays for the care of nearly two-thirds of seniors in nursing homes.³ Yet the president's FY 2019 budget slashes Medicaid by \$306 billion over 10 years—in addition to repealing the Affordable Care Act through the Graham-Cassidy legislation—potentially leading to dramatic cuts to eligibility or benefits for millions of people, including seniors in nursing homes.⁴
- **Cutting Social Security:** The president's FY 2019 budget breaks President Trump's promise not to cut Social Security by slashing \$72 billion over 10 years from federal disability programs, the majority of which comes from Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which provide modest but critical income support to millions of older Americans.⁵ Three-quarters of disabled workers receiving SSDI are ages 50 and older,⁶ as are more than half of SSI recipients.⁷ The budget's proposed cuts would punish intergenerational families in particular, by targeting households with more than one member who receives SSI for cuts.
- **Reducing prevention of elder abuse:** The budget calls for eliminating the Social Services Block Grant,⁸ a key source of federal funding that supports elder abuse prevention services.⁹ In addition, the budget eliminates federal funding for the Legal Services Corporation,¹⁰ decimating civil legal aid, which is a critical source of help for older people facing a range of types of abuse.¹¹ In 2016, older people comprised nearly 1 in 5 of the clients served by federally funded legal aid programs.¹²
- **Increasing elder hunger:** The budget would slash federal funding for Meals on Wheels,¹³ which provides meals to low-income older people unable to leave their homes, by eliminating both the Social Services Block Grant¹⁴ and the Community

Development Block Grant.¹⁵ What's more, the budget would also deeply cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's largest food assistance program, by 31 percent.¹⁶ SNAP served, on average, about 4.7 million households that include someone age 60 or older each month in 2016.¹⁷

- **Increasing housing insecurity:** The president's budget calls for eliminating the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program,¹⁸ both of which play vital roles in helping keep older people safe and warm in their homes. Indeed, one-third of households helped by LIHEAP include someone who is age 60 or older.¹⁹ Further, the budget eliminates HOME Investment Partnerships,²⁰ a program that rehabilitates and develops affordable housing for low-income households—making it possible for many low-income older people to remain in their homes and age in place. The budget also eliminates the Public Housing Capital Fund,²¹ a critical source of funding for the preservation of public housing units. One-third of public housing units include a head of household or spouse who is age 62 or older.²²
- **Reducing employment and volunteering opportunities:** Despite encouraging “community engagement,”²³ President Trump's budget would greatly diminish community engagement opportunities for older people by eliminating the Senior Community Service Employment Program,²⁴ which provides funding to connect nearly 70,000 unemployed, low-income older Americans with paid community service opportunities and workforce training.²⁵ It also calls for eliminating the Corporation for National and Community Service,²⁶ which funds senior volunteering programs including Senior Corps, a program that connects more than 245,000 Americans ages 55 and older with volunteer opportunities in their communities, such as tutoring children, rebuilding after disasters, providing respite care to families, and helping veterans find jobs.²⁷

Katherine Gallagher Robbins is the director of poverty policy at the Center for American Progress. Leonard Scott IV is the special assistant for the Poverty to Prosperity Program at the Center.

Endnotes

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