



DIVERSE
ELDERS
COALITION

DIVERSE ELDERS AND THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT

WHO ARE DIVERSE ELDERS?



We define diverse elders as the elders of color, American Indian and Alaska Native elders, and LGBTQ elders living in the United States and its territories.



Currently, one in five elders in the United States is a person of color or American Indian/Alaska Native. By 2040, it will be one out of three.



Three out of every eight LGBT adults are elders. With the first generation of LGBT people to come out during and after Stonewall growing older and increasing visibility, this number is expected to increase as well.

WHAT DOES THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT MEAN FOR DIVERSE ELDERS?

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is legislation that supports a variety of programs and services for older Americans in the United States. The OAA provides critical services that help about 11 million older adults stay as independent as possible. These services include:

- Supportive Services
- Preventive Health
- Job Training and Employment
- Grants to Native Americans and Protection of Vulnerable Adults
- Meals and Nutrition Services
- Family Caregiver Support Services

The OAA was due to be reauthorized by Congress in 2011. While the act is still being funded, budget cuts and the sequester have reduced the overall amount of funding being provided to states for elder services. The Diverse Elders Coalition urges the reauthorization of the OAA with the following key themes in mind:

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

Specific Solutions for Specific Constituencies

Legislation should promote cultural and linguistic competence for all racial and ethnic groups, as well as for LGBT older adults, across physical and mental health.

DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Naming the Issues and Naming the Solutions

Legislation should specifically identify constituencies that are particularly vulnerable. Data collection and reporting requirements should ensure that all racial and ethnic groups, as well as LGBT groups, are studied and served.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER LAW

Solutions for Protecting the Most Vulnerable

Race, ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation, or gender identity should not be deterrents to their receiving services made possible by the Older Americans Act.

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The Diverse Elders Coalition (DEC) advocates for policies and programs that improve aging in our communities as racially and ethnically diverse people; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender people.