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Washington Office
OF NORTH AMERICA

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HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE PROJECT FY2016

Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Supportive Services

Request: Please ask your Senators and Representatives to weigh in with Congressional leadership and appropriators to include \$2.5 million for the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Project within the final spending bill Congress is negotiating. This is the amount House appropriators included this summer within the FY 2016 Health and Human Services/Administration for Community Living/Aging and Disability Services Programs/Aging Network Support Activities account. Securing FY 2016 funding is critical to carrying out year-two of the project.

Current Status: The program commenced in FY 2015 with a \$2.5 million allocation within the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act. The President's budget request for FY 2016 includes \$2.5 million to fund year two of the project. The House Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee report for FY 2016 includes the second-year funding. The Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee report for FY 2016 does not.

Target Population: According to the Department of Health and Human Services, there are approximately 130,000 Holocaust Survivors living in the United States today – with an estimated 30,000 living in poverty. Holocaust Survivors are an average age of 84 years old. As a group, they are at increased risk of depression, social isolation, and extremely poor outcomes associated with institutionalization, which can be emotionally and physically devastating as a trigger of the traumas of forced institutionalizations and relocations they experienced during the Holocaust. Access to home- and community-based services and a plan to age-in-place that take into account the adversity and trauma they have experienced is essential to the quality and impact of care they receive in the few remaining years of their lives.

Trauma-Informed Care: Traumatic experiences (particularly childhood adversity and early life trauma, such as surviving the Holocaust), have a direct impact on people's behavioral health, physical health, and can lead to social problems and early death. The trauma also adversely impacts how people engage healthcare and services, leading to missed or cancelled appointments, avoiding preventative care, poor adherence to medical recommendations, chronic health problems, and anxiety about medical procedures. Understanding trauma can help providers better manage risk. As a matter of public health, new approaches need to be developed and implemented to reduce the impact of trauma on individuals and to build the capacity of providers to be informed and trained in the practice of trauma-informed approaches. The timing is particularly acute for Holocaust Survivors who will require greater services to meet their complex needs as they become increasingly frail.

Program Overview: With a \$2.5 million allocation for FY 2015, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) entered into a cooperative agreement in late September, between the Administration on Aging and The Jewish Federations to carry out this initiative. It is designed as a 5-year project to advance "person-centered, trauma-informed (PCTI)" supportive services to Survivors. 90% of the funding will provide for direct services at the local level, and the federal funding will be supplemented through a 40% local match.

To carry out its responsibilities under the under the agreement, JFNA has established the JFNA Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care, which will distribute and oversee approximately 25 subgrants to local providers. Through this framework, the subgrantees will expand person-centered, trauma-informed supportive services for Holocaust survivors throughout the United States. The JFNA Center will monitor and evaluate the successes, challenges, and lessons learned pertaining to the local projects and broadly share the information across service providers throughout the Aging Services Network.

Program Outcomes: The project will lead to the development of multiple new models, tools, approaches, and methods for providing PCTI supportive services for Survivors and significantly increase the number of PCTI supportive services to Holocaust Survivors. It will also pave the way for the applicability of PCTI supportive services for other aging victims of trauma, such as refugee populations and victims of natural disasters.

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