

ADVOCACY ALERT

Urge Your Lawmakers to Help Address the Workforce Shortage in the Budget Reconciliation Package Being Finalized NOW

Congress is currently finalizing a broad “budget reconciliation” bill that is expected to include many of the “human infrastructure” provisions included in President Biden’s American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan. Given the ongoing, acute workforce shortage, several provisions which are currently included or are being considered which would help address this crisis are especially important.

Today, we ask you to join us to send a message to your lawmakers: support full funding of the provision permanently incentivizing states to deliver or improve Home- and Community-Based Services programs, including through increasing wages and benefits for direct care workers; support the grant program funding strategies to recruit and retain direct care workers; and include the provisions of the WORK NOW Act.

[Click here](#) to send a message to your lawmakers using our advocacy tool. We provide suggested language and encourage you to personalize this message with your own story.

House lawmakers are expected to finalize their version of the bill and hold a vote very soon, with the Senate completing their work on the package shortly thereafter. *That means it’s **CRITICAL** that we reach out **NOW** to lawmakers, alerting them to the importance and impact of these provisions.*

While details of what will be in the final package are subject to change as the process moves forward, we are asking Members of Congress to support the following significant provisions for our network currently included:

- \$190B for home and community-based services (HCBS) for older adults and persons with disabilities. Fully funding this investment would enable health and human services providers to expand services and eliminate the nationwide waitlist of 850,000 older adults and persons with disabilities so they can receive needed services in their homes and communities. This could also help address the workforce shortage, for example, through increased wages and benefits for direct care workers. Finally, it would allow expansion of the Money Follows the Person program and for older adults transitioning from acute care settings to their homes to receive the services needed to prevent rehospitalization such as transportation, nutrition, and more. To achieve all these goals, it is very important that lawmakers fully fund the program.
- \$1.48B to fund grants to entities including nonprofits with experience in aging and disability to recruit and retain direct care workers, through strategies including raising wages and creating training opportunities to help address the direct care workforce shortage.

We are also asking lawmakers to include in the final bill the provisions of the WORK NOW Act (S. 740/H.R. 1987): this \$50 billion grant program will provide nonprofit health and human services organizations funding to pay wages, salaries and benefits to retain staff, meet the greater demand for services, and hire unemployed workers.

While we will continue to advocate that **ALL** our crucial priorities for further support for nonprofits be enacted, we know it’s important for lawmakers to hear our voice now as they write and finalize this major legislation. Thank you again for your work on the frontlines of the pandemic caring for people while taking extraordinary steps to protect your staff and people served, and for continuing to join with us to ensure our faith-based advocacy voice is heard by lawmakers. As always, we will continue to stay in touch with you with further updates.

For further information, please contact Sarah Dobson, Senior Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, at sdobson@lutheranservices.org or 202-499-5832.

Lutheran Services in America is the national network of Lutheran social ministry organizations—connecting over 300 health and human services nonprofit service providers located throughout the country. Recognized by The Chronicle of Philanthropy and Forbes as one of the nation’s largest nonprofits, the Lutheran Services in America network operates with more than \$22 billion in annual revenue and over 250,000 member employees. Together, the network lifts up the nation’s most vulnerable people from children to seniors — making a difference in the lives of one in 50 Americans every year.