

**ADMINISTRATION ON AGING**  
**REAUTHORIZATION OF OLDER AMERICANS ACT**

**Testimony by**

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This testimony is specific for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title VI Program, at a later date, the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona and the Arizona Indian Council on Aging will submit another written or oral testimony to respond to the other Older Americans Act Titles. The Older Americans Act established the Title VI Program that has effectively and efficiently served as the infrastructure for aging service delivery for the tribal communities. For over 25 years, American Indian aging programs have leveraged federal dollars with other federal, state, and local funds to meet the needs and provide a better quality of life for tribal elders living on reservations. The reauthorization of the Older Americans Act in 2011 provides an ideal opportunity for Congress to ensure that the necessary system of services remain in place to meet the needs of the current aging population as well as the needs of the American Indian elders. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona and the Arizona Indian Council on Aging seek the adoption of the following recommendations as part of the 2011 reauthorization of the Older Americans Act:

**Title VI Program:**

1. Continue the Title VI Part A, Part B, and Part C Programs but increase funding for Title VI to \$200 million dollars to support comprehensive community-based services for older adults. American Indian tribes are located in the “Frontier” regions where supplies are extremely costly to deliver to the tribes. An example is the Havasupai Tribe in Arizona, the Havasupai Tribe is located in the bottom of the Grand Canyon so they pay excessive costs to have supplies delivered. The continuation of the Title VI Part A, Part B, and Part C Programs and

2. Increase funding in Title VI for tribes and tribal area agencies on aging to participate specifically in evidence-based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention programs. The chronic health problems are particularly higher for American Indian elders when compared to other ethnic groups in the United States. Obesity, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, and Arthritis are the top four chronic diseases for American Indian elders served by Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., with funding support from Administration on Aging, implemented two evidence-based models to teach elders to advocate for themselves and to exercise to strengthen their bodies. The evaluations collected from the participants indicated that the elders are more aware of their chronic conditions and they are learning how to take care of themselves; also those that have participated in the exercise classes said they have gained strength. Some elders provided testimony that they are able to walk longer and have loss weight after participating in this program. With this, we, as Tribal people wish to see an increase of funding in Title VI for tribes and tribal Area Agencies on Aging to participate specifically in evidence-based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention programs.
3. Title VI services cover only tribal reservation and exclude American Indian elders living off the reservations. The OAA needs to create opportunities for “Urban American Indians” to participate in urban senior centers. American Indian elders that are living in urban areas find it difficult to participate in services provided by the senior centers due to language and cultural barriers. Further more, majority of the urban senior centers do not understand or they are not aware of the “tribal” services provided by federal agencies such as Indian Health Service. Currently, the Area Agency on Aging, Region One in Phoenix, AZ in collaboration

with urban Indian organizations is providing services for Urban American Indians. The Older Americans Act should create partnership opportunities in which AAAs in urban areas to consult with tribal organizations to greatly improve the quality of life for American Indian elders living in urban areas.

4. Continue the Title VI training and technical assistance opportunities for Title VI Directors, staff and caregivers. The tribes use the Title VI funding for salaries, supplies, and operating cost to provide services to American Indian elders. There is a need for staff training like nutrition and sanitation, customer service, and caregiver training. Thus continuing the Title VI training and technical assistance for Title VI Program Directors, staff and caregivers would continue to improve their knowledge and skills about aging services. Tribal Area Agencies on Aging need to be included in funding opportunities to provide training and technical assistance.
5. Elder Abuse is an issue that affect the lives of elders. In tribal communities, there a few tribal enforcement agencies, social services agencies, and health programs that have specific policies, training curricula, or systematic methods to help prevent, identify, and tract elder abuse cases. Some agencies may believe Elder Abuse is an insignificant program and does not need specific criminal and juvenile justice responses. The ITCA and AICOA recognize the importance of taking a proactive stance toward identifying and responding to potential Elder abuse, by strongly encouraging the establishment of Tribal laws and procedures, supporting the efforts to provide professional and family training opportunities on this topic, and encouraging collaboration among Tribal Nations, the federal government, tribal justice systems and community agencies in providing needed services for victims and offenders living in Tribal communities. ITCA and AICOA recommend keeping the Title VII, Part B

sub-title in the Act and allocating funding to provide elder abuse awareness and protection grants in Indian Country.