



## OLDER AMERICANS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

### NRPA POLICY POSITION

- Support the bipartisan Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act (S.1562 and H.R. 4122), which was reintroduced in the Senate by Sen. Sanders (I-VT) and in the House of Representatives by Rep. Bonamici (D-OR). The OAA addresses the health, welfare and economic needs of older individuals by promoting senior center modernizations and evidence based chronic disease management and falls prevention. Park and Recreation agencies provide valuable senior facilities and programming to local communities.

### BACKGROUND

This legislation would reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, which expired in 2011 and has funded nutritional and social services for seniors for nearly 50 years. The OAA Reauthorization would fund facilities and important services that keep older adults healthy and independent, such as meals, job training, senior centers, health promotion and more. Similar legislation has also been introduced by Rep. Gibson (R-NY).

In local communities, park and recreation agencies provide a variety of senior activities and programming ranging from nutritious meals, exercise classes, personal fitness assessments, social events, wellness programs and more. Through the feeding programs, park and recreation agencies provide healthy meals to approximately 500,000 seniors annually.

In Louisiana, the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORDC) has partnered with the New Orleans Ballet Association (NOBA) to offer the Senior Dance Fitness Program, a two-hour dance fitness class. The first hour consists primarily of warm-up, stretching and conditioning with music. The second hour includes walking and more vigorous dance exercises that incorporate entertaining music and upbeat dance moves. Seniors learn balance, strength, mobility and flexibility, and the recently expanded program also includes healthy eating and lifestyle education. The classes and workshops offer participants not only physical benefits like weight-loss and lower blood pressure, but also a means of socialization and fun.

NRPA is also a proud partner with the Arthritis Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP) and Walk with Ease (WWE) interventions through sub-awards to 29 local park and recreation agencies. Through the first year of this initiative we expect that an additional 2,000 people will participate in these evidence-based programs.

### WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ACT

Our country's seniors are living longer, and we are seeing a growth in numbers of the aging population. With this, there is an increasing demand for services available to the senior populace. In communities across the country, park and recreation agencies provide vital programs and in some cases are the only dedicated senior facilities available. It is critical to join NRPA in supporting the passage of the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act.

**The United States population aged 65 and over is expected to double in size within the next 25 years. By 2030, almost 1 out of every 5 Americans — some 72 million people — will be 65 years or older.<sup>1</sup>**