

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/comprehensive-community-living-building-on-obamas-budget-plan-for-seniors>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The Obama administration released its budget for fiscal year 2015 earlier this month, and [as reported by the National Council on Aging](#), it contains several changes to how programs affecting seniors are funded, ranging from Medicare adjustments to cuts in Social Security wait times. Many of these initiatives are welcome: a proposed \$56.5 million increase to Section 202 housing and a \$15 million increase to programs that offer home finance-related counseling services will enable many more elderly Americans to continue living in their longtime homes and communities.

Most of Obamas budget priorities for seniors support the notion that it is not enough to improve the quality and affordability of acute medical care, thus enabling elderly people to live longer. They must also prosper and lead fulfilling lives. In state and local governments and business communities, however, further cost cutting jeopardizes this goal. The state of Washington has recently [cut funding by 50 percent to its public guardianship program](#), which, like [Veras Guardianship Project](#), serves as a guardian of last resort to incapacitated people who have no family or friend who can help them, thus stripping away funding to a program that was only allocated \$400,000 a year. In New York, David Pomerantz, the executive director of Brooklyns Prospect Park Residence assisted living facility [has announced the facilitys closure](#) due to an unsustainable property tax burden, a loss that displaces its 130 older residents and gives them just 90 days to find new homes a nearly impossible feat, given the limited availability of quality supportive living resources for older adults.

Respectfully caring for Americas aging population requires more than adequate federal resources. It requires collaboration, comprehension, and concern across diverse groups of stakeholders.

To achieve this goal, individuals and organizations in all fields and walks of life need to join in the conversation, and recognize that the preventive costs of enabling greater community living among older individuals, beyond ensuring basic decency, [can also generate cost savings to the state](#). More effort must be spent to assist those experiencing the issues often associated with aging today. More research needs to target how different systems and structures, from civil law to architecture to personal finance, can be made accessible to those with diminished capacities. Though federal spending is a good start, developing novel solutions to these challenges necessitates a more holistic approach.

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