

The Texas Legislature should target state American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal relief funding to long-term care facilities to (1) address staffing needs and strengthen the long-term care workforce, and (2) support the operations of long-term care facilities and their efforts to prevent and mitigate infectious diseases.

Take Action to Encourage Support for Long-Term Care Facilities! *TELL YOUR STORY*

1. [Send a message](#) to Governor Greg Abbott.
2. [Send a message](#) to Lt. Governor Dan Patrick.
3. Call and email your state legislators. Find your representatives at <https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home>.
4. Request a Zoom meeting with your state legislator.

LeadingAge Texas members were surveyed in late July / early August 2021 on a variety of COVID-19 related topics...

- 70%** reported being unable to hire enough CNAs in the last month.
- 77%** identified recruitment and retention of staff as the biggest challenge facing their organization.
- 75%** reported they are currently operating at a loss.

As COVID-19 swept across the nation, and nursing homes became one of the deadliest jobs in America,¹ recruiting and retaining long-term care staff became even more difficult. According to recent analysis, nursing homes experienced an 11.5% decline in employment since February 2020.²

****Highlight the difficulties you are having recruiting and retaining staff, and the impact it has on patient care. Discuss your concerns related to mandatory staff vaccinations announced by the Biden Administration.*

LeadingAge Texas recommends the Texas Legislature target \$400 million in ARPA funds toward strengthening the long-term care workforce. Use of funds could include:

1. \$200M for recruiting and hiring qualified staff, with sign-on bonuses and overtime pay, and use of direct care agency staffing support.
2. \$100M for staff retention programs to include frontline staff bonus, hero pay, and shift differential pay.
3. Improved education and training/mentor programs for nursing facility and other professional staff.
4. \$50M to provide up to \$5,000 in loan assistance to 10,000 APRN/RN/LVNs.
5. \$25M in free training and testing for CNAs and Temporary Nurse Aides.
6. \$25M to expand access to LVN to RN Bridge Programs through educational curriculums designed to allow licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) to advance their education and career.

****As community spread of COVID-19 surged across Texas, congregate living settings were at highest risk of infection. Discuss what measures were taken to keep your staff and residents safe.*

LeadingAge Texas recommends the Texas Legislature target \$350 million in ARPA funds toward a service delivery and capital improvements that enhance infection control and prevention efforts. Use of funds could include:

1. Facility/environmental improvements, such as air filtration and ventilation, isolation wings and private rooms, to reduce the risk of communicable disease spread to be better prepared for future outbreaks and pandemics.
2. Expanding telehealth capacity and digital communication technology.
3. Maintain adequate supply and use of personal protective equipment and testing materials.
4. Food service and delivery reconfiguration to reduce spread of infection.

¹ Available at: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/nursing-home-workers-had-one-of-the-deadliest-jobs-of-2020/>

² Available at: <https://skillednursingnews.com/2021/03/u-s-nursing-home-workforce-shrank-by-11-5-since-start-of-pandemic/>